

much to hope that in time the iron of the mines will be worked with machinery for manufactures ; and that multitudes, aided by this machinery, and subsisted on the rude agricultural produce, which now flows out, will invest the value of their labour in manufactured commodities adapted to the demand of foreign markets, and better able from their superior value, compared with their bulk, to pay the cost of transport by land. Then, and not till then, can we expect to see these territories pay a considerable net surplus revenue to government, and abound in a middle class of merchants, manufacturers, and agricultural capitalists.<sup>1</sup>

At Sanodā there is a very beautiful little fortress or castle now unoccupied, though still entire. It was built by an officer of the Rājā Chhatar Sāl of Bundēlkhand, about one hundred and twenty years ago.<sup>2</sup> He had a grant, on the joār (*Holcus sorghum*). Cotton is also sown in it, but not very generally. This black soil requires little rain, and is fertile without manure. It absorbs water too freely to be suitable for irrigation, and in most seasons does not need it. The formation of this soil, under the name of *rēgar*, is discussed and partly explained by Dr. Oldham, Superintendent of the Geological Survey of India, in the Introduction to the *Central Provinces Gazetteer*, p. xlvi, and by Mr. W. T. Blanford in p.p. 429-434 of the *Manual of the Geology of India*. Mr. Blanford's conclusion is that " *rēgar* has been shown on fairly trustworthy evidence to result from the impregnation of certain argillaceous formations with organic matter, but that the process which has taken place is imperfectly understood, and that some peculiarities in distribution yet require explanation." The author's summary description of the *rēgar* as " basaltic detritus " takes no account of the very high percentage of organic matter in the best black soils, which enables them to be cropped for centuries without manure. Some, but not all, forms of *rēgar* are based on the decomposition of basalt.

<sup>1</sup> The land revenue is now being very largely increased, and the resources and communications of the country have been greatly developed during the last thirty years. The formation of the Central Provinces in a separate administration in 1861 secured for the Sāgar and Nerbudda territories the attention which they failed to obtain from the distant government of the North-Western Provinces. Sir Richard Temple, the first Chief Commissioner, administered the Central Provinces with extraordinary energy and success.

<sup>2</sup> Rājā Chhatarsāl Bundela was Rājā of Pannā. In the year 1733,

tenure of military service, of twelve villages situated round this place ; and a man who could build such a castle to defend the surrounding country from the inroads of free-booters, and to secure himself and his troops from any sudden impulse of the people's resentment, was as likely to acquire an increase of territorial possession in these parts, as he would have been in Europe during the middle ages. The son of this chief, by name Rāi Singh, was, soon after the castle had been completed, killed in an attack upon a town near Chitrakot;<sup>1</sup> and, having in the estimation of the people, *become a god*, he had a temple and a tomb raised to him close to our encampment. I asked the people how he had become a *god* ; and was told that some one who had been long suffering from a quartan ague went to the tomb one night, and promised Rāi Singh, whose ashes lay under it, that if he could contrive to cure his ague for him, he would, during the rest of his life, make offerings to his shrine. After that he had never another attack, and was very punctual in his offerings. Others followed his example, and with like success, till Rāi Singh was recognized among them universally as a god, and a temple raised to his name. This is the way that gods were made all over the world at one time, and are still made all over India. Happy had it been for mankind if those only who were supposed to do good had been deified.<sup>2</sup>

in return for assistance rendered him by the Peshwa, he ceded to that potentate one-third of his territory, namely, the districts of Sāgar, Jālaun, and part of Damoh. Chhatarsāl died about 1734 or 1735. His active career began in 1671. A summary account of it is given by Mr. Atkinson in Vol. I. of the *N.W. Provinces Gazetteer*, pp. 25-28.

<sup>1</sup> Chitrakot, in the Bānda district of Bundēlkhand, under the government of the North-Western Provinces, and seventy-one miles distant from Allahabad, is a famous place of pilgrimage, much frequented by the votaries of Rāma. Large fairs are held there.

<sup>2</sup> The performance of miraculous cures at the tomb is not necessary for the deification of a person who has been specially feared in his lifetime, or has died a violent death. Either of these conditions is enough to render his ghost formidable, and worthy of propitiation. Shrines

Dec.

On the 2nd we came on to the village of Khojanpur, (leaving the town and cantonments of Sāgar to our left), a distance of some fourteen miles. The road for a great part of the way lies over the bare back of the sandstone strata, the covering of basalt having been washed off. The hills, however, are, at this distance from the city and cantonments of Sāgar, nicely wooded ; and, being constantly intersected by pretty little valleys, the country we came over was picturesque and beautiful. The soil of all these valleys is rich from the detritus of the basalt that forms or caps the hills ; but it is now in a bad state of cultivation, partly from several successive seasons of great calamity, under which the people have been suffering, and partly from over-assessment ; and this posture of affairs is continued by that loss of energy, industry, and character, among the farmers and cultivators, which must everywhere result from these two evils. In India, where the people have learnt so well to govern themselves, from the want of settled government, good or bad government really depends almost altogether upon *good or bad settlements of the land revenue*. Where the government demand is imposed with moderation, and enforced with justice, there will the people be generally found happy and contented, and disposed to perform their duties to each other and to the state ; except when they have the misfortune to suffer from drought, blight, and other calamities of season.<sup>1</sup>

I have mentioned that the basalt in the Sāgar district reposes for the most part immediately upon the sandstone of the Vindhya range ; and it must have been deposited on the sand, while the latter was yet at the bottom of the

to such persons are very numerous both in Bundēlkhand and other parts of India. Miracles, of course, occur at nearly every shrine, and are too common and well attested to attract much attention.

<sup>1</sup> These observations are as true to-day as they were fifty years ago. Disastrous cases of over-assessment were common in the early years of British rule, and the mischief so wrought has been sometimes traceable for generations afterwards. During the last fifty years the error, though less common, has not been unknown.

ocean, though this range is now, I believe, nowhere less than from fifteen hundred to two thousand feet above the level of the sea. The marks of the ripple of the sea may be observed in some places where the basalt has been recently washed off, beautifully defined, as if formed only yesterday, and there is no other substance to be seen between the two rocks.

The texture of the sandstone at the surface, where it comes in contact with the basalt, has in some places been altered by it ; but in others it seems to have been as little changed as the habitations of the people who were suffocated by the ashes of Vesuvius in the city of Pompeii. I am satisfied, from long and careful examination, that the greater part of this basalt, which covers the table-land of Central and Southern India, must have been held for some time in suspension in the ocean or lake into which it was first thrown in the shape of ashes, and then gradually deposited. This alone can account for its frequent appearance of stratification, for the gentle blending of its particles with those of the sand near the surface of the latter ; and, above all, for those level steps, or tables, lying one above another horizontally in parallel bars on one range, corresponding exactly with the same parallel lines one above another on a range twenty or thirty miles across the valley. Mr. Scrope's theory is, I believe, that these are all mere flowing "*coulées*" of lava, which, in their liquid state, filled hollows, but afterwards became of a harder texture, as they dried and crystallized, than the higher rocks around them ; the consequence of which is that the latter has been decomposed and washed away, while the basalt has been left to form the highest elevations. My opinion is that these steps, or stairs, at one time formed the beds of the ocean, or of great lakes, and that the substance of which they are composed was, for the most part, projected into the water, and there held in suspension till gradually deposited. There are, however, amidst these steps, and beneath them, masses of more compact and crystalline

basalt, that bear evident signs of having been flows of lava.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Since writing the above, I have seen Colonel Sykes's notes on the formations of Southern India in the *Indian Review*. The facts there described seem all to support my conclusion, and his map would answer just as well for Central as for Southern India; for the banks of the Nerbudda and Chambal, Sōn, and Mahānadī, as well as for those of the Bām and the Bimā. Colonel Sykes does not, I believe, attempt to account for the stratification of the basalt; he merely describes it. [W. H. S.]

The author's theory of the subaqueous origin of the greater part of the basalt of Central and Southern India, otherwise known as the "Deccan Trap Series," has been supported by numerous excellent geologists. Mr. W. T. Blanford shows that this theory is untenable, and that there is "clear and unmistakable evidence that the traps were in great part of sub-aërial formation." The intercalation of sedimentary beds with fresh-water fossils is conclusive proof that the lava flows associated with such beds are not submarine. The hypothesis that the lower beds of traps were poured out in a vast, but shallow, fresh-water lake extending throughout the area over which the inter-trappean limestone formation extends appears to be extremely improbable. The lava seems to have been poured, during a long succession of ages, over a land surface, uneven and broken in parts, including, at various times and places, small and very shallow lakes and marshes. A great tract of the volcanic region appears to have remained almost undisturbed to the present day, affected by sub-aërial erosion alone. The geological horizon of the Deccan trap cannot be precisely defined, but Mr. Blanford refers the formation vaguely to "times subsequent to middle cretaceous," and thinks it, "on the whole, more probably upper cretaceous than tertiary." The "steps," or conspicuous terraces, which can be traced on the hill-sides for great distances, are now explained as being "due to the outcrop of the harder basaltic strata, or of those beds which resist best the disintegrating influences of exposure."

The general horizontality of the Deccan trap over an area of 200,000 square miles, and the absence of volcanic hills of the usual conical form are difficulties which have caused much discussion. Some of the "old volcanic vents" appear to have existed near Poona and Mahāblēshwar. The entire area has been subjected to sub-aërial denudation on a gigantic scale, which explains the occurrence of the basalt as the caps of isolated hills. Much further investigation is required to clear up details. (*Manual of the Geology of India*, Part I, Ch. XIII.)

Reasoning from analogy at Jubbulpore, where some of the basaltic cappings of the hills had evidently been thrown out of craters long after this surface had been raised above the waters, and become the habitation both of vegetable and animal life, I made the first discovery of fossil remains in the Nerbudda valley. I went first to a hill within sight of my house in 1828,<sup>1</sup> and searched exactly between the plateau of basalt that covered it and the stratum immediately below, and there I found several small trees with roots, trunks, and branches, all entire, and beautifully petrified. They had been only recently uncovered by the washing away of a part of the basaltic plateau. I soon after found some fossil bones of animals.<sup>2</sup> Going over to Sāgar, in the end of 1830, and reasoning there upon the same analogy, I searched for fossil remains along the line of contact between the basalt and the surface upon which it had been deposited, and I found a grove of silicified palm-trees within a mile of the cantonments. These palm-trees had grown upon a calcareous deposit formed from springs rising out of the basaltic range of hills to the south. The commissariat officer had cut a road through this grove, and all the European officers of a large military station had been every day riding through it without observing the geological treasure; and it was some time before I could convince them that the stones which they had every day seen were really petrified palm-trees. The roots and trunks were beautifully perfect.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The author took charge of the Jubbulpore district in March 1828.

<sup>2</sup> The fossiliferous beds near Jabalpur, described in the text, seem to belong to the group now classed as the Lamētā beds. The bones of a large dinosaurian reptile have been identified. (*Manual of the Geology of India*, Part I, p. 310.)

<sup>3</sup> "Many years ago Dr. Spry (*Note on the Fossil Palms and Shells lately discovered on the Table-Land of Sāgar in Central India, in Journal As. Soc. of Bengal for 1833*, Vol. II, p. 639) and, subsequently to him, Captain Nicholls (*Journal of Asiatic Soc. of Bombay*, Vol. V, p. 614), studied and described certain trunks of palm-trees, whose

silicified remains are found imbedded in the soft intertrappean mud-beds near Sāgar. . . . The trees are imbedded in a layer of calcareous black earth, which formed the surface soil in which they grew ; this soil rests on, and was made up of the disintegration of, a layer of basalt. It is covered over by another and similar layer of the same rock near where the trees occur. . . . The palm-trees, now found fossilized, grew in the soil, which, in the condition of a black calcareous earthy bed, we now find lying round their prostrate stems. They fell (from whatever cause), and lay until their silicification was complete. A slight depression of the surface, or some local or accidental check of some drainage-course, or any other similar and trivial cause, may have laid them under water. The process of silicification proceeded gradually, but steadily, and, after they had there, in lapse of ages, become lapidified, the next outburst of volcanic matter overwhelmed them, broke them, partially enveloped, and bruised them, until long subsequent denudation once more brought them to light." (J. G. Medlicott, in *Memoirs of the Geological Survey of India*, Vol. II, Part II, p.p. 200, 203, 204, 205, 216, as quoted in *C. P. Gazetteer*, p. 435.) The intertrappean fossils are all those of organisms which would occur in shallow fresh-water lakes or marshy ground.

Besides the author's friend, Dr. H. H. Spry, Dr. Spilsbury contributed papers on the Nerbudda fossils to Vols. III, VI, VIII, IX, X, and XIII of the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*. Other writers have also treated of the subject, but it appears to be by no means fully worked out. James Prinsep, to whom no subject came amiss, discussed the Jubbulpore fossil bones in the volume in which Dr. Spry's paper appeared. Dr. Spry was the author of a work entitled *Modern India: with Illustrations of the Resources and Capabilities of Hindustan* (2 vols. 8vo, 1838).



## CHAPTER XV

Legend of the Sāgar Lake—Paralysis from eating the Grain of the *Lathyrus sativus*.

THE cantonments of Sāgar are about two miles from the city and occupied by three regiments of native infantry, one of local horse, and a company of European artillery.<sup>1</sup> The city occupies two sides of one of the most beautiful lakes of India, formed by a wall which unites two sand-stone hills on the north side. The fort and part of the town stands upon this wall, which, according to tradition, was built by a wealthy merchant of the Banjāra caste.<sup>2</sup> After he had finished it, the bed of the lake still remained dry; and he was told in a dream, or by a priest, that it would continue so till he should consent to sacrifice his own daughter, then a girl, and the young lad to whom she was affianced, to the tutelary god of the place. He accordingly built a little shrine in the centre of the valley,

<sup>1</sup> The garrison is stated in the *Gazetteer* (1870) to consist of an European regiment of infantry, two batteries of European artillery, one native cavalry, and one native infantry regiment. It now (1893) consists of one battery of Royal Artillery, a detachment of British Infantry, a regiment of Bengal Cavalry, and a detachment of Bengal Infantry. According to the census of 1891, the population of Sāgar is : City, 32,740 ; Cantonments, 11,909 : Total, 44,649.

<sup>2</sup> The Banjāras, or Brinjāras, are a wandering tribe, principally employed as carriers of grain and salt on bullocks and cows. They used to form the transport service of the Moghal armies. Their organization and customs are in many ways peculiar. The development of roads and railways has much diminished the importance of the tribe. A good account of it will be found in Balfour's *Cyclopædia*, s.v. Banjāra.

which was to become the bed of the lake, put the two children in, and built up the doorway. He had no sooner done so than the whole of the valley became filled with water, and the old merchant, the priest, the masons, and spectators, made their escape with much difficulty. From that time the lake has been inexhaustible ; but no living soul of the Banjāra caste has ever since been known to drink of its waters. Certainly all of that caste at present religiously avoid drinking the water of the lake ; and the old people of the city say that they have always done so since they can remember, and that they used to hear from their parents that they had always done so. In nothing does the founder of the Christian religion appear more amiable than in his injunction, “Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not.” In nothing do the Hindoo deities appear more horrible than in the delight they are supposed to take in their sacrifice—it is everywhere the helpless, the female, and the infant that they seek to devour—and so it was among the Phoenicians and their Carthaginian colonies. Human sacrifices were certainly offered in the cities of Sāgar during the whole of the Marātha government up to the year of 1800, when they were put a stop to by the local governor, Āsā Sāhib, a very humane man ; and I once heard a very learned Brahman priest say that he thought the decline of his family and government arose from this *innovation*. “There is,” said he, “no sin in *not* offering human sacrifices to the gods where none have been offered ; but, where the gods have been accustomed to them, they are naturally annoyed when the rite is abolished, and visit the place and people with all kinds of calamities.” He did not seem to think that there was anything singular in this mode of reasoning, and perhaps three Brahman priests out of four would have reasoned in the same manner.<sup>1</sup>

On descending into the valley of the Nerbudda over the

<sup>1</sup> See note on human sacrifice, *ante*, Chapter VIII, p. 57.

Vindhya range of hills from Bhopāl, one may see by the side of the road, upon a spur of the hill, a singular pillar of sandstone rising in two spires, one turning above and rising over the other, to the height of from twenty to thirty feet. On a spur of a hill half a mile distant is another sandstone pillar not quite so high. The tradition is that the smaller pillar was the affianced bride of the taller one, who was a youth of a family of great eminence in these parts. Coming with his uncle to pay his first visit to his bride in the procession they call the "barāt," he grew more and more impatient as he approached nearer and nearer, and she shared the feeling. At last, unable to restrain himself, he jumped upon his uncle's shoulder, and looked with all his might towards the spot where his bride was said to be seated. Unhappily she felt no less impatient than he did, and raised "the fringed curtains of her eye," as he raised his, [and] they saw each other at the same moment. In that moment the bride, bridegroom, and uncle were all converted into stone pillars; and there they stand to this day a monument, in the estimation of the people, to warn men and womankind against too strong an inclination to indulge curiosity. It is a singular fact that in one of the most extensive tribes of the Gond population of Central India, to which this couple is said to have belonged, the bride always goes to the bridegroom in the procession of the "barāt," to prevent a recurrence of this calamity. It is the bridegroom who goes to the bride among every other class of the people of India, as well Muhammadans as Hindoos. Whether the usage grew out of the tradition, or the tradition out of the usage, is a question that will admit of much being said on both sides. I can only vouch for the existence of both. I have seen the pillars, heard the tradition from the people, and ascertained the usage; as in the case of that of the Sāgar lake.

The Mahādēo sandstone hills, which in the Sātpura range overlook the Nerbudda to the south, rise to between four

and five thousand feet above the level of the sea;<sup>1</sup> and in one of the highest parts a fair was formerly, and is, perhaps, still held<sup>2</sup> for the enjoyment of those who assemble to witness the self-devotion of a few young men, who offer themselves as a sacrifice to fulfil the vows of their mothers. When a woman is without children she makes votive offerings to all the gods, who can, she thinks, assist her, and promises of still greater in case they should grant what she wants. Smaller promises being found of no avail, she at last promises her first-born, if a male, to the god of destruction, Mahādēo. If she gets a son, she conceals from him her vows till he has attained the age of puberty; she then communicates it [*sic*] to him, and enjoins him to fulfil it. He believes it to be his paramount duty to obey his mother's call; and from that moment he considers himself as devoted to the god. Without breathing to any living soul a syllable of what she has told him, he puts on the habit of a pilgrim or religious mendicant, visits all the celebrated temples dedicated to this god in different parts of India;<sup>3</sup> and, at the annual fair on the Mahādēo hills, throws himself from a perpendicular height of four or five hundred feet, and is dashed to pieces upon the rocks below.<sup>4</sup> If the youth does not feel himself quite prepared for the sacrifice on the first visit, he spends another year in pilgrimages, and returns to fulfil his mother's vow at the

<sup>1</sup> In the Hoshangābād district of the Central Provinces. The sand-stone formation here attains its highest development, and is known to geologists as the "Mahādēo sandstones." The new sanitarium of Pachmarī is situated in these hills.

<sup>2</sup> It has been long since suppressed.

<sup>3</sup> Benares is the principal seat of the worship of Mahādēo (Siva), but his shrines are found everywhere throughout India. One hundred and eight of these are reckoned as important. In Southern India the most notable is the great temple at Tanjore (See Chapter XVII of Monier Williams' *Religious Thought and Life in India*.)

<sup>4</sup> "This mode of suicide is called Bhrigu-pātā, 'throwing one's self from a precipice.' It was once equally common at the rock of Girnār [in Kāthiāwār], and has only recently been prohibited." (*Ibid.* p. 349.)

next fair. Some have, I believe, been known to postpone the sacrifice to a third fair ; but the interval is always spent in painful pilgrimages to the celebrated temples of the god. When Sir R. Jenkins was the Governor-General's representative at the court of Nāgpur,<sup>1</sup> great efforts were made by him and all the European officers under him to put a stop to these horrors by doing away with the fair ; and their efforts were assisted by the *cholera morbus*, which broke out among the multitude one season while they were so employed, and carried off the greater part of them. This seasonable visitation was, I believe, considered as an intimation on the part of the god that the people ought to have been more attentive to the wishes of the *white men*, for it so happens that Mahādēo is the only one of the Hindoo gods who is represented with a white face.<sup>2</sup> He figures among the *dramatis personæ* of the great pantomime of the Rāmlilā,<sup>3</sup> or fight for the recovery of Sītā from the demon

<sup>1</sup> Nagpore (Nāgpur) was governed by Marāthā rulers, with the title of Bhōnslā, also known as the Rājās of Berār. The last Rājā, Raghojī, died without heirs in 1853. His dominions were then annexed as lapsed territory, by Lord Dalhousie. Nāgpur is now the headquarters of the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces.

<sup>2</sup> "There is a legend that Siva appeared in the Kali age, for the good of the Brāhmans, as 'Sveta,' 'the white one,' and that he had four disciples, to all of whom the epithet 'Sveta' is applied." (Monier Williams, *Religious Thought and Life in India*, p. 80, note 2.) Various explanations of the legend have been offered. Prof. A. Weber is inclined to think that the various references to white teachers in Indian legends allude to Christian missionaries. The Mahābhārata mentions the travels of Nārada and others across the sea to 'Sveta-dwipa,' the 'Island of the White Men,' in order to learn the doctrine of the unity of God. This tradition appears to be intelligible only if understood to commemorate the journeys of pious Indians to Alexandria, and their study of Christianity there. (*Die Griechen in Indien*, 1890, p. 34.)

<sup>3</sup> The Rāmlilā, a performance corresponding to the mediæval European "miracle-play," is celebrated in Northern India in the month of Kuār (or Asvin, September-October) at the same time as the Durgā Pūjā is solemnized in Bengal. Rāma and his brother Lachhman are impersonated by boys, who are seated on thrones in

king of Ceylon ; and is the only one with a white face. I know not whether the fair has ever been revived, but [I] think not.

In 1829 the wheat and other spring crops in this and the surrounding villages were destroyed by a severe hail-storm ; in 1830 they were deficient from the want of seasonable rains : and in 1831 they were destroyed by blight. During these three years the "teori," or what in other parts of India is called "kesārī" (the *Lathyrus sativus* of botanists), a kind of wild vetch, which, though not sown itself, is left carelessly to grow among the wheat and other grain, and given in the green and dry state to cattle, remained uninjured, and thrived with great luxuriance.<sup>1</sup> In 1831 they reaped a rich crop of it from the blighted wheat fields, and subsisted upon its grain during that and the following years, giving the stalks and leaves only to their cattle. In 1833 the sad effects of this food began to manifest themselves. The younger part of the population of this and the surrounding villages, from the age of thirty downwards, began to be deprived of the use of their limbs below the waist by paralytic strokes, in all cases sudden, but in some cases more severe than in others. About half the youth of this village of both sexes became affected during the years 1833 and 1834, and many of them have lost the use of their lower limbs entirely, and are unable to move. The youth of the surrounding villages, in which the "teori" from the same causes formed the chief article of food during the years 1831 and 1832, have suffered to an equal degree. Since

state. The performance concludes by the burning of a wicker image of Rāvana, the demon king of Lankā (Ceylon), who had carried off Rāma's queen, Sītā. The story is the leading subject of the great epic called the Rāmāyana.

<sup>1</sup> The *Lathyrus sativus* is cultivated in the Punjab and in Tibet. Its poisonous qualities are attributed to its excessive proportion of nitrogenous matter, which requires dilution. Another species of the genus, *L. cicer*, which is grown in Spain, has similar properties. The distressing effects described in the text have been witnessed by other observers. (Balfour's *Cyclopædia*, s.v. "Lathyrus.")

the year 1834 no new case has occurred ; but no person once attacked had been found to recover the use of the limbs affected ; and my tent was surrounded by great numbers of the youth in different stages of the disease, imploring my advice and assistance under this dreadful visitation. Some of them were very fine-looking young men of good caste and respectable families ; and all stated that their pains and infirmities were confined entirely to the parts below the waist. They described the attack as coming on suddenly, often while the person was asleep, and without any warning symptoms whatever ; and stated that a greater portion of the young men were attacked than of the young women. It is the prevailing opinion of the natives throughout the country that both horses and bullocks, which have been much fed upon "teori," are liable to lose the use of their limbs ; but, if the poisonous qualities abound more in the grain than in the stalk or leaves, man, who eats nothing but the grain, must be more liable to suffer from the use of this food than beasts, which eat it merely as they eat grass or hay.

I sent the son of the head man of the village and another, who were among the young people least affected, into Sāgar with a letter to my friend Dr. Foley, with a request that he would try what he could do for them ; and if he had any fair prospect of being able to restore these people to the use of their limbs, that measures might be adopted through the civil authorities to provide them with accommodation and the means of subsistence, either by private subscription, or by application to government. The civil authorities, however, could find neither accommodation nor funds to maintain these people while under Dr. Foley's care ; and several seasons of calamity had deprived them of the means of maintaining themselves at a distance from their families. Nor is a medical man in India provided with the means found most effectual in removing such affections, such as baths, galvanic batteries, &c. It is lamentable to think how very little we have as yet done

for the country in the healing art, that art which, above all others, a benevolent and enlightened government should encourage among the people of India.

All we have as yet done has been to provide medical attendants for our European officers, regiments, and jails. It must not, however, be supposed that the people of India are without medical advice, for there is not a town or considerable village in India without its practitioners, the Hindoos following the Egyptian (*Misrāni*), and the Musalmāns the Grecian (*Yunāni*) practice. The first prescribe little physic and much fasting ; and the second follow the good old rules of Hippocrates, Galen, and Avicenna, with which they are all tolerably well acquainted. As far as the office of physician goes, the natives of India of all classes, high and low, have much more confidence in their own practitioners than in ours, whom they consider too reckless and better adapted to treat diseases in a cold than a hot climate. They cannot afford to give the only fees which European physicians would accept ; and they see them, in their hospital practice, trust much to their native assistants, who are very few of them able to read any book, much less to study the profound doctrines of the great masters of the science of medicine.<sup>1</sup> No native ventures to offer an opinion upon this abstruse subject in any circle where he is not known to be profoundly read in either Arabic or Sanskrit lore ; nor would he venture to give a prescription

<sup>1</sup> One of the tent-pitchers one morning, after pitching our tent, asked the loan of a small extra one for the use of his wife, who was about to be confined. The basket-maker's wife of the village near which we were encamped was called ; and the poor woman, before we had finished our breakfast, gave birth to a daughter. The charge is half a rupee, or one shilling for a boy, and a quarter, or sixpence, for a girl. The tent-pitcher gave her ninepence, which the poor midwife thought very handsome. The mother had come fourteen miles upon a loaded cart over rough roads the night before ; and went the same distance with her child the night after, upon the same cart. The first midwife in Europe could not have done her duty better than this poor basket-maker's wife did hers. [W. H. S.]

without first consulting, "spectacles on nose," a book as large as a church Bible. The educated class, as indeed all classes, say that they do not want our physicians, but stand much in need of our surgeons. Here they feel that they are helpless, and we are strong; and they seek our aid whenever they see any chance of obtaining it, as in the present case.<sup>1</sup> Considering that every European gentleman they meet is more or less a surgeon, or hoping to find him so, people who are afflicted, or have children afflicted, with any kind of malformation, or malorganization, flock round them [*sic*] wherever they go, and implore their aid; but implore in vain, for, when they do happen to fall in with a surgeon, he is a mere passer-by, without the means or the time to afford relief. In travelling over India there is nothing which distresses a benevolent man so much as the necessity he is daily under of telling poor parents, who, with aching hearts and tearful eyes, approach him with their suffering children in their arms, that to relieve them requires time and means which are not at a traveller's command, or a species of knowledge which he does not possess; it is bitter thus to dash to the ground the cup of hope which our approach has raised to the lip of mother, father, and child; but he consoles himself with the prospect, that at no distant period a benevolent and enlightened government will distribute over the land those from whom the afflicted will not seek relief in vain.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The "present case" was of a medical, not a surgical, nature.

<sup>2</sup> The Hindoo practitioners are called "baid" (Sanskrit "vaidya," followers of the Veda, that is to say, the Ayur Veda). The Musalmān practitioners are generally called "hakīm." The Egyptian school (Misrānī, Misrī, or Suryānī, that is, Syrian) never practise bleeding, and are partial to the use of metallic oxides. The Yunānī physicians approve of bleeding, and prefer vegetable drugs. The older writers on India fancied that the Hindoo system of medicine was of enormous antiquity, and that the principles of Galenical medical science were ultimately derived from India. Modern investigation has proved that Hindoo medicine, like Hindoo astronomy, is mainly of Greek origin. This conclusion has been expressed in an exaggerated form by some writers, but its general truth appears to be established.

The Hindoo books treating of medicine are certainly older than Wilson supposed, for the Bower manuscript, written in the fifth century of our era, contains a Sanskrit medical treatise. The writer had, however, plenty of time to borrow from Galen, who lived in the second century. The native aversion to European medicine, as distinguished from surgery, still exists, though in a somewhat less degree than in the author's time. Many municipal boards insist on employing "baids" and "hakims" in addition to the practitioners trained in European methods. Well-to-do patients often delay resort to the English physician until they have exhausted all resources of the "hakim" and have been nearly killed by his drastic treatment. One medical innovation, the use of quinine as a febrifuge, has secured universal approbation. I never heard of a native who disbelieved in quinine. Chlorodyne, also, is fully appreciated, but most of the European medicines are regarded with little faith. Since the author wrote, great progress has been made in providing hospital and dispensary accommodation. Each "district," or unit of civil administration, has a fairly well equipped combined hospital and dispensary at headquarters, and branch dispensaries exist in almost every district. An Inspector-General of Dispensaries supervises the medical administration of each province, and medical schools have been organized at Calcutta, Madras, Bombay, Lahore, and Agra. During Lord Dufferin's Viceroyalty energetic steps were taken to improve the system of medical relief for females. Pandit Madhusadan Gupta, on the 10th January, 1836, was the first Hindu who ventured to dissect a human body and teach anatomy. India can now boast of a considerable number of Hindoo and Musalmān practitioners, trained in European methods, and skilful in their profession. Much has been done, infinitely more remains to be done. The article "Medicine" in Balfour's *Cyclopaedia*, on which I have drawn for some of the facts above stated, gives a good summary of the history of medicine in India, but greatly exaggerates the antiquity of the Hindoo books. On this question Weber's paper "Die Griechen in Indien" (Berlin, 1890, p. 28), and Dr. Hoermle's remarks on the Bower manuscript (in *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal* for 1891, Vol. LX, Part I, p. 145) may be consulted.

## CHAPTER XVI

Suttee Tombs—Insalubrity of deserted Fortresses.

ON the 3rd we came to Bahrol,<sup>1</sup> where I had encamped with Lord William Bentinck on the last day of December, 1832, when the quicksilver in the thermometer at sunrise, outside our tents, was down to twenty-six degrees of Fahrenheit's thermometer. The village stands upon a gentle swelling hill of decomposed basalt, and is surrounded by hills of the same formation. The Dasān river flows close under the village, and has two beautiful reaches, one above, the other below, separated by the dyke of basalt, over which lies the ford of the river.<sup>2</sup>

There are beautiful reaches of the kind in all the rivers in this part of India, and they are almost everywhere formed in the same manner. At Bahrol there is a very unusual number of tombs built over the ashes of women who have burnt themselves with the remains of their husbands. Upon each tomb stands erect a tablet of free-stone, with the sun, the new moon, and a rose engraved upon it in bas-relief in one field;<sup>3</sup> and the man and

<sup>1</sup> December, 1835. The name of the village is spelled Behrole by the author.

<sup>2</sup> The Dasān river rises in the Bhopāl State, flows through the Sāgar district of the Central Provinces, and along the southern boundary of the Lalitpur district of the North-Western Provinces. It forms the boundary between the Jhānsī and Hamīrpur districts, and falls into the Betwa after a course of about 220 miles. The name is generally, but erroneously, written Dhasān. It is the Sanskrit Dasārṇa.

<sup>3</sup> This emblem is a lotus, not a rose flower. The latter is never used in Hindoo symbolism, as far as I am aware. The lotus is a solar emblem, and intimately associated with the worship of Vishnu.

woman, hand in hand, in the other. On one stone of this kind I saw a third field below these two, with the figure of a horse in bas-relief, and I asked one of the gentlemen farmers, who was riding with me, what it meant. He told me that he thought it indicated that the woman rode on horseback to bathe before she ascended the pile.<sup>1</sup> I asked him whether he thought the measure prohibiting the practice of burning good or bad.

"It is," said he, "in some respects good, and in others bad. Widows cannot marry among us, and those who had no prospect of a comfortable provision among their husband's relations, or who dreaded the possibility of going astray, and thereby sinking into contempt and misery, were enabled in this way to relieve their minds, and follow their husbands, under the full assurance of being happily united to them in the next world."

When I passed this place on horseback with Lord William Bentinck, he asked me what these tombs were, for he had never seen any of the kind before. When I told him what they were, he said not a word; but he must have felt a proud consciousness of the debt of gratitude which India owes to the statesman who had the courage to put a stop to this great evil, in spite of all the fearful obstacles which bigotry and prejudice opposed to the measure. The seven European functionaries in charge of the seven districts of the newly-acquired territories were requested, during the administration of Lord Amherst in 1826, to state whether the burning of widows could or should be prohibited; and I believe every one of them declared that it should not. And yet, when it was put a

<sup>1</sup> It rather indicates that the husband was on horseback when killed. The sculptures on satī pillars often commemorate the mode of death of the husband. Sometimes these pillars are inscribed. They usually face the east. An open hand is often carved in the upper compartment as well as the sun and moon. A drawing of such a pillar will be found in *Journal As. Soc. of Bengal*, vol. xlvi, Part i: Cunningham's *Archaeological Reports*, vol. iii, p. 10; vol. vii, p. 137; vol. x, p. 75; and vol. xxi, p. 101, may be consulted.

stop to only a few years after by Lord William, not a complaint or murmur was heard. The replies to the Governor-General's inquiries were, I believe, throughout India, for the most part, opposed to the measure.<sup>1</sup>

On the 4th we came to Dhamoni, ten miles. The only thing remarkable here is the magnificent fortress, which is built upon a small projection of the Vindhya range, looking down on each side into two enormously deep glens, through which the two branches of the Dasān river descend over the table-land into the plains of Bundēlkhand.<sup>2</sup> The rays of the sun seldom penetrate to the bottom of these glens, and things are, in consequence, grown there that could not be grown in parts more exposed.

Every inch of the level ground in the bed of the streams below seems to be cultivated with care. This fortress is said to have cost more than a million of money, and to have been only one of fifty-two great works, of which a former Rājā of Bundēlkhand, Birsingh Deo, laid the foundation in the same *happy hour* which had been pointed out to him by his astrologers.<sup>3</sup> The works form an acute

<sup>1</sup> The "newly-acquired territories" referred to are the Sāgar and Nerbudda Territories, comprising the seven districts, Sāgar, Jubbulpore, Hoshangābād, Seonī, Damoh, Narsinghpur, and Baitūl, ceded in 1818, and now included in the Central Provinces. The tenor of the replies given to Lord Amherst's queries shows how far the process of Hinduizing had advanced among the European officials of the Company. Lord Amherst left India in March, 1828. See *ante*, Chapter IV, p.p. 22 to 37, and Chapter VIII, p. 57, for cases of satī (suttees).

<sup>2</sup> Dhamoni is in the Sāgar district of the Central Provinces, about twenty-nine miles north of Sāgar. The fort was taken by General Marshall in 1818. It had been rebuilt by Rājā Birsingh Deo of Orchhā on an enormous scale about the end of the sixteenth century. In the original edition, the author's march is said to have taken place "on the 24th." This must be a mistake for "on the 4th"; as the last date, that of the march to Bahrol, was the 3rd December. The author reached Agra on the 1st January, 1836.

<sup>3</sup> The number fifty-two is one of the Hindoo favourite numbers, like seven, twelve, and eighty-four, held sacred for astronomical or

triangle, with the base towards the table-land, and the two sides hanging perpendicularly over the glens, while the apex points to the course of the streams as they again unite, and pass out through a deep chasm into the plains of Bundēlkhand.

The fortress is now entirely deserted, and the town, which the garrison supported, is occupied by only a small police-guard, stationed here to see that robbers do not take up their abode among the ruins. There is no fear of this. All old deserted fortresses in India become filled by a dense stream of carbonic acid gas, which is found so inimical to animal life that those who attempt to occupy them become ill, and, sooner or later, almost all die of the consequences. This gas, being specifically much heavier than common air, descends into the bottom of such unoccupied fortresses, and remains stagnant like water in old reservoirs. The current of pure air continually passes over, without being able to carry off the mass of stagnant air below ; and the only way to render such places habitable is to make large openings in the walls on all sides, from the top to the bottom, so that the foul air may be driven out by the current of pure atmospheric air, which will then be continually rushing in. When these fortresses are thickly peopled, the continual motion within tends, I think, to mix up this gas with the air above ; while the numerous fires lighted within, by rarefying that below, tend to draw down a regular supply of

astrological reasons. Birsingh Deo was the younger brother of Rāmchand, head of the Bundēla clan. To oblige Prince Salīm, afterwards the Emperor Jahāngīr, he murdered Abūl Fazl, the celebrated minister and historian of Akbar, on the 12th August, 1602. Jahāngīr, after his accession, rewarded the murderer by allowing him to supersede his brother in the headship of his clan, and by appointing him to the rank of "commander of three thousand." The capital of Birsingh was Orchhā. His successors are often spoken of as Rājās of Tehrī. The murder is fully described in *The Emperor Akbar* by Count Von Noer, translated by A. S. Beveridge, Calcutta, 1890, vol. ii, pp. 384-404. Orchhā is described *post*, Chapters XXII, XXIII.

the atmospheric air from above for the benefit of the inhabitants. When natives enter upon the occupation of an old fortress of this kind, that has remained long unoccupied, they always make a solemn religious ceremony of it ; and, having fed the priests, the troops, and a crowd of followers, all rush in at once with beat of drums, and as much noise as they can make. By this rush, and the fires that follow, the bad air is, perhaps, driven off, and never suffered to collect again while the fortress remains fully occupied. Whatever may be the cause, the fact is certain that these fortresses become deadly places of abode for small detachments of troops, or small parties of any kind. They all get ill, and few recover from the diseases they contract in them.

From the year 1817, when we first took possession of the Sāgar and Nerbudda Territories, almost all the detachments of troops we required to keep at a distance from the headquarters of their regiments were posted in these old deserted fortifications. Our collections of revenue were deposited in them ; and, in some cases, they were converted into jails for the accommodation of our prisoners. Of the soldiers so lodged, I do not believe that one in four ever came out well ; and, of those who came out ill, I do not believe that one in four survived five years. They were all abandoned one after the other ; but it is painful to think how many hundreds, I may say thousands, of our brave soldiers were sacrificed before this resolution was taken. I have known the whole of the survivors of strong detachments that went in, in robust health, three months before, brought away mere skeletons, and in a hopeless and dying state. All were sent to their homes on medical certificate, but they almost all died there, or in the course of their journey.



## CHAPTER XVII

### Basaltic Cappings—Interview with a Native Chief—A Singular Character.

ON the 5th<sup>1</sup> we came to the village of Seori. Soon after leaving Dhamoni, we descended the northern face of the Vindhya range into the plains of Bundelkhand. The face of this range overlooking the valley of the Ner-budda to the south is, as I have before stated, a series of mural precipices, like so many rounded bastions, the slight dip of the strata being to the north. The northern face towards Bundelkhand, on the contrary, here descends gradually, as the strata dip slightly towards the north, and we pass down gently over their back. The strata have, however, been a good deal broken, and the road was so rugged that two of our carts broke down in descending. From the descent over the northern face of the table-land into Bundelkhand to the descent over the southern face into the valley of the Nerbudda must be a distance of one hundred miles directly north and south.

The descent over the northern face is not everywhere so gradual ; on the contrary, there are but few places where it is at all feasible ; and some of the rivers of the table-land between Jubbulpore and Mirzapore have a perpendicular fall of more than four hundred feet over these mural precipices of the northern face of the Vindhya

<sup>1</sup> 5th December, 1835. The date is misprinted "3rd" in the original edition. See note <sup>2</sup> to last preceding chapter, p. 134.

range.<sup>1</sup> A man, if he have good nerve, may hang over the summits, and suspend in his hand a plummet that shall reach the bottom.

I should mention that this table-land is not only intersected by ranges, but everywhere studded with isolated hills rising suddenly out of basins or valleys. These ranges and isolated hills are all of the same sandstone formation, and capped with basalt, more or less amygdaloidal. The valleys and cappings have often a substratum of very compact basalt, which must evidently have flowed into them after these islands were formed. The question is, how were these valleys and basins scooped out? "Time, time, time!" says Mr. Scrope; "grant me only time, and I can account for everything." I think, however, that I am right in considering the basaltic cappings of these ranges and isolated hills to have once formed part of continued flat beds of great lakes. The flat parallel planes of these cappings, corresponding with each other, however distantly separated the hills they cover may be, would seem to indicate that they could not all have been subject to the convulsions of nature by which the whole substrata were upheaved above the ocean. I am disposed to think that such islands and ranges of the sandstone were formed before the deposit of the basalt, and that the form of the surface is now returning to what it then was, by the gradual decomposition and wearing away of the latter rock. Much, however, may be said on both sides of this, as of every other question. After descending from the sandstone of the Vindhya<sup>2</sup> range into Bundelkhand, we

<sup>1</sup> A good view of the precipices of the Kaimur range, the eastern continuation of the Vindhyan chain, is given facing p. 41 of Vol. I of Hooker's *Himalayan Journals* (ed. 1855).

<sup>2</sup> The author's theory is certainly untenable. He failed to realize the vast effects of sub-aërial denudation. All the evidence shows that the successive lava outflows which make up the Deccan trap series ultimately converted the surface of the land over which they welled out into an enormous, nearly uniform, plain of basalt, resting on the Vindhyan sandstone and other rocks. This great sheet of lava,

pass over basalt and basaltic soil, reposing immediately on syenitic granite, with here and there beds and veins of pure feldspar, hornblende, and quartz.

Takht Singh, the younger brother of Arjun Singh, the Rājā of Shāhgarh,<sup>1</sup> came out several miles to meet me on his elephant. Finding me on horseback, he got off from his elephant, and mounted his horse, and we rode on till we met the Rājā himself, about a mile from our tents. He was on horseback, with a large and splendidly dressed train of followers, all mounted on fine sleek horses, bred in the Rājā's own stables. He was mounted on a snow-white steed of his own breeding (and I have rarely seen a finer animal), and dressed in a light suit of silver brocade made to represent the scales of steel armour, surmounted by a gold turban. Takht Singh was more plainly dressed, but is a much finer and more intelligent-looking man. Having escorted us to our tents, they took their leave, and returned to their own, which were pitched on a rising ground on the other side of a small stream, half-a-mile distant. Takht Singh resides here in a very pretty fortified castle on an eminence. It is a square building, with a round bastion at each corner, and one on each face, rising into towers above the walls.

A little after midday the Rājā and his brother came to pay us a visit ; and about four o'clock I went to return it,

extending, east and west, from Nāgpur to Bonbay, a distance of about five hundred miles, was then, in succeeding millenniums, subjected to the denuding forces of air and water, until gradually huge tracts of it were worn away, forming beds of conglomerate, gravel, and clay. The flat-topped hills have been carved out of the basaltic surface by the agencies which wore away the massive sheet of lava. The basaltic cappings of the hills certainly cannot have "formed part of continued flat beds of great lakes." See the notes to Ch. XIV, *ante*, p.p. 119-121. Mr. Scrope was quite right. Vast periods of time must be allowed for geological history, and millions of years must have elapsed since the flow of the Deccan lava.

<sup>1</sup> In the Sāgar district. The last Rājā joined the rebels in 1857, and so forfeited his rank and territory.

accompanied by Lieutenant Thomas. As usual, he had a nautch (dance) upon carpets, spread upon the sward under awnings in front of the pavilion in which we were received. While the women were dancing and singing, a very fine panther was brought in to be shown to us. He had been caught, full-grown, two years before, and, in the hands of a skilful man, was fit for the chase in six months. It was a very beautiful animal, but, for the sake of the sport, kept wretchedly thin.<sup>1</sup> He seemed especially indifferent to the crowd and the music, but could not bear to see the woman whirling about in the dance with her red mantle floating in the breeze; and, whenever his head was turned towards her, he cropped his ears. She at last, in play, swept close by him, and with open mouth he attempted to spring upon her, but was pulled back by the keeper. She gave a shriek, and nearly fell upon her back in fright.

The Rājā is a man of no parts or character, and, his expenditure being beyond his income, he is killing his goose for the sake of her eggs—that is, he is ruining all the farmers and cultivators of his large estate by exactions, and thereby throwing immense tracts of fine land out of tillage. He was the heir to the fortress and territory of Garhā Kotā, near Sāgar, which was taken by Sindhia's army, under the command of Jean Baptiste Filose,<sup>2</sup> just before our conquest in 1817. I was then

<sup>1</sup> The name panther is usually applied only to the large, fulvous variety of *Felis pardus* (Linn.) (*F. leopardus*, *Leopardus varius*). The animal described in the text was evidently a specimen of the hunting leopard, *Felis jubata* (*F. guttata*, *F. venatica*).

<sup>2</sup> This officer was one of the many “condottieri” of various nationality who served the native powers during the eighteenth century, and the early years of the nineteenth. He commanded five infantry regiments at Gwālior. His “kingdom-taking” raid in 1815 or 1816 is described *post* in Ch. XLIX. Another officer named Filose is mentioned as deceased in Franklin's *Military Memoirs of Mr. George Thomas*, p.p. 360–362 (London reprint, 8vo, 1805). Several members of the Filose family, comprising two grandsons, and several great-grandsons of Jean Baptiste Filose, now (1893) reside in Gwālior, and are in the service of the state.

with my regiment, which was commanded by Colonel, afterwards Major-General G——, a very singular character. When our surgeon, Dr. E——, received the newspaper announcing the capture of Garhā Kotā in Central India by *Jean Baptiste*, an officer of the corps was with him, who called on the colonel on his way home, and mentioned this as a bit of news. As soon as this officer had left him, the colonel wrote off a note to the doctor :—" My dear Doctor,—I understand that that fellow, *John the Baptist*, has got into Sindhia's service, and now commands an army—do send me the newspapers." These were certainly the words of his note, and, at the only time I heard him speak on the subject of religion he discomfited his adversary in an argument at the mess by " Why, sir, you do not suppose that I believe in those fellows, Luther, Calvin, and John the Baptist, do you ? "

Nothing could stand this argument. All the party burst into a laugh, which the old gentleman took for an unequivocal recognition of his victory, and his adversary was silenced. He was an old man when I first became acquainted with him. I put into his hands, when in camp, Miss Edgeworth's novels, in the hope of being able to induce him to read by degrees ; and I have frequently seen the tears stealing down over his furrowed cheeks, as he sat pondering over her pages in the corner of his tent. A braver soldier never lived than old G—— ; and he distinguished himself greatly in the command of his regiment, under Lord Lake, at the battle of Laswāri<sup>1</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> The fiercely-contested battle of Laswāri was fought on the 1st November, 1803, between the British force under Lord Lake and the flower of Sindhia's army, known as the " Deccan Invincibles." Sindhia's troops lost about seven thousand killed, and two thousand prisoners. The British loss in killed and wounded amounted to more than eight hundred. A medal to commemorate the victory was struck in London in 1851, and presented to the survivors. Laswāri is a village in the Alwar State, 128 miles south of Delhi.

siege of Bharatpur.<sup>1</sup> It was impossible ever to persuade him that the characters and incidents of these novels were the mere creations of fancy—he felt them to be true—he wished them to be true, and he would have them to be true. We were not very anxious to undeceive him, as the illusion gave him pleasure and did him good. Bolingbroke says, after an ancient author, “History is philosophy teaching by example.”<sup>2</sup> With equal truth may we say that fiction, like that of Maria Edgeworth, is philosophy teaching by emotion. It certainly taught old G——— to be a better man, to leave much of the little evil he had been in the habit of doing, and to do much of the good he had been accustomed to leave undone.

<sup>1</sup> Bharatpur (Bhurtpore), in the Jāt State of the same name, is 34 miles west of Agra. In January and February, 1805, Lord Lake four times attempted to take it by assault, and each time was repulsed with heavy loss. On the 18th of January, 1826, Lord Combermere stormed the fortress. The fortifications were then dismantled. A large portion of the walls is now standing, and presents an imposing appearance. They seem to have been repaired. See *post*, Vol. II, Ch. VII.

<sup>2</sup> “I will answer you by quoting what I have read somewhere or other—in *Dionysius Halicarn.*, I think—that history is philosophy teaching by example.” (Bolingbroke, *Letters on the Study and Use of History*, Letter II, p. 14 of Vol. VIII of edition printed by T. Cadell, London, 1770.) The Greek words are *ἱστορία φιλοσοφία ἐπτὸν ἐκ παραδειγμάτων*.



## CHAPTER XVIII

### Birds' Nests—Sports of Boyhood.

ON the 6th<sup>1</sup> we came to Sayyidpur, ten miles, over an undulating country, with a fine soil of decomposed basalt, reposing upon syenite, with veins of feldspar and quartz. Cultivation partial, and very bad ; and population extremely scanty. We passed close to a village, in which the children were all at play ; while upon the bushes over their heads were suspended an immense number of the beautiful nests of the sagacious “bayā” bird, or Indian yellow-hammer,<sup>2</sup> all within reach of a grown-up boy, and one so near the road that a grown-up man might actually look into it as he passed along, and could hardly help shaking it. It cannot fail to strike an European as singular to see so many birds' nests, situated close to a village, remain unmolested within reach of so many boisterous children, with their little proprietors and families fluttering and chirping among them with as great a feeling of security and gaiety of heart as the children themselves enjoy.

In any part of Europe not a nest of such a colony could

<sup>1</sup> December, 1835. The name of the village is given in the author's text as Seindpore. It seems to be the place which is called Siedpore in the next chapter.

<sup>2</sup> The common weaver bird, *Phoecus baya*, Blyth. “*Ploceinae*, the weaver birds. . . . They build nests like a crucible, with the opening downwards, and usually attach them to the tender branches of a tree hanging over a well or tank. *P. baya* is found throughout India ; its nest is made of grasses and strips of the plantain or date-palm stripped while green. It is easily tamed and taught some tricks, such as to load and fire a toy cannon, to pick up a ring, etc.” (Balfour's *Cyclopædia*, s.v. *Ploceinae*.)

have lived an hour within reach of such a population ; for the bayā bird has no peculiar respect paid to it by the people here, like the wren and robin-redder in England. No boy in India has the slightest wish to molest birds in their nests ; it enters not into their pastimes, and they have no feeling of pride or pleasure in it. With us it is different —to discover birds' nests is one of the first modes in which a boy exercises his powers, and displays his love of art. Upon his skill in finding them he is willing to rest his first claim to superior sagacity and enterprise. His trophies are his string of eggs ; and the eggs most prized among them are those of the nests that are discovered with most difficulty, and attained with most danger. The same feeling of desire to display their skill and enterprise in search after birds' nests in early life renders the youth of England the enemy almost of the whole animal creation throughout their after career. The boy prides himself on his dexterity in throwing a stone or a stick ; and he practices on almost every animal that comes in his way, till he never sees one without the desire to knock it down, or at least to hit it ; and, if it is lawful to do so, he feels it to be a most serious misfortune not to have a stone within his reach at the time. As he grows up, he prides himself upon his dexterity in shooting, and he never sees a member of the feathered tribe within shot, without a desire to shoot it, or without regretting that he has not a gun in his hand to shoot it. That he is not entirely destitute of sympathy, however, with the animals he maims for his amusement is sufficiently manifest from his anxiety to put them out of pain the moment he gets them.

A friend of mine, now no more, Captain Medwin, was once looking with me at a beautiful landscape painting through a glass. At last he put aside the glass, saying : " You may say what you like, S——, but the best landscape I know is a fine black partridge<sup>1</sup> falling before my Joe Manton."

<sup>1</sup> *Francolinus vulgaris* ; a capital game bird.

The following lines of Walter Scott, in his *Rokeby*, have always struck me as very beautiful :—

“ As yet the conscious pride of art  
 Had steel’d him in his treacherous part ;  
 A powerful spring of force unguessed  
 That hath each gentler mood suppressed,  
 And reigned in many a human breast ;  
 From his that plans the rude campaign,  
 To his that wastes the woodland reign,” &c.<sup>1</sup>

Among the people of India it is very different. Children do not learn to exercise their powers either in discovering and robbing the nests of birds, or in knocking them down with stones and staves ; and, as they grow up, they hardly ever think of hunting or shooting for mere amusement. It is with them a matter of business ; the animal they cannot eat they seldom think of molesting.

Some officers were one day pursuing a jackal, with a pack of dogs, through my grounds. The animal passed close to one of my guard, who cut him in two with his sword, and held up the reeking blade in triumph to the indignant cavalcade ; who, when they came up, were ready to eat him alive.

“ What have I done,” said the poor man, “ to offend you ? ”

“ Have you not killed the jackal ? ” shouted the whipper-in, in a fury.

“ Of course I have ; but were you not all trying to kill him ? ” replied the poor man. He thought their only object had been to kill the jackal, as they would have killed a serpent, merely because he was a mischievous and noisy beast.

The European traveller in India is often in doubt whether the peacocks, partridges, and ducks, which he finds round populous villages, are tame or wild, till he asks some of the villagers themselves, so assured of safety do these creatures become, and so willing to take advantage of

<sup>1</sup> Canto V, stanza 22, line 3.

it for the food they find in the suburbs. They very soon find the difference, however, between the white-faced visitor and the dark-faced inhabitants. There is a fine date tree overhanging a kind of school at the end of one of the streets in the town of Jubbulpore, quite covered with the nests of the bayā birds ; and they are seen, every day and all day, fluttering and chirping about there in scores, while the noisy children at their play fill the street below, almost within arm's length of them: I have often thought that such a tree so peopled at the door of a school in England, might work a great revolution in the early habits and propensities of the youth educated in it. The European traveller is often amused to see the pariah dog<sup>1</sup> squatted close in front of the traveller during the whole time he is occupied in cooking and eating his dinner, under a tree by the roadside, assured that he shall have at least a part of the last cake thrown to him by the stranger, instead of a stick or a stone. The stranger regards him with complacency, as one that reposes a quiet confidence in his charitable disposition, and flings towards him the whole or part of his last cake, as if his meal had put him in the best possible humour—with him and all the world.

<sup>1</sup> The author spells the word Pareear. The editor has used the form now customary. The word is the Tamil appellation of a large body of the population of Southern India, which stands outside the orthodox Hindoo castes, but has a caste organization of its own. Europeans apply the term to the low-caste mongrel dogs which infest villages and towns throughout India.



## CHAPTER XIX

Feeding Pilgrims—Marriage of a Stone with a Shrub.

AT Sayyidpur<sup>1</sup> we encamped in a pretty little mango grove, and here I had a visit from my old friend Jānkī Sewak, the high priest of the great temple that projects into the Sāgar lake, and is called Bindrāban.<sup>2</sup> He has two villages rent free, worth a thousand rupees a year ; collects something more through his numerous disciples, who wander over the country ; and spends the whole in feeding all the members of his fraternity (Bairāgis), devotees of Vishnu, as they pass his temple in their pilgrimages. Every one who comes is considered entitled to a good meal and a night's lodging ; and he has to feed and lodge about a hundred a day. He is a man of very pleasing manners and gentle disposition, and everybody likes him. He was on his return from the town of Ludaura,<sup>3</sup> where he had been, at the invitation of the Rājā of Orchhā, to assist at the celebration of the marriage of Sālagrām with the Tulasī,<sup>4</sup> which there takes place every year under the

<sup>1</sup> Spelled Siedpore in the author's text.

<sup>2</sup> More correctly Brindāban (Vrindāvana). The name originally belongs to one of the most sacred spots in India, situated near Mathurā (Muttra) on the Jumna, which is the reputed scene of the dalliance between Krishna and the milkmaids (Gopīs), and is also associated with the legend of Rāma.

<sup>3</sup> Twenty-seven miles north-west of Tehri in the Orchhā State.

<sup>4</sup> The Tulasī plant, or basil, *Ocimum sanctum*, is “not merely sacred to Vishnu or to his wife Lakshmī ; it is pervaded by the essence of these deities, and itself worshipped as a deity and prayed to accordingly. . . . The Tulasī is the object of more adoration than

auspices, and at the expense of the Rājā, who must be present. "Sālagrāms"<sup>1</sup> are rounded pebbles which contain the impressions of ammonites, and are washed down into the plains of India by the rivers from the limestone rocks in which these shells are imbedded in the mountains of the Himalaya.<sup>2</sup> The Spiti valley<sup>3</sup> contains an immense deposit of fossil ammonites and belemnites<sup>4</sup> in limestone rocks, now elevated above sixteen thousand feet above the level of the sea ; and from such beds as these are brought down the fragments, which, when rounded in their course, the poor Hindoo takes for representatives of Vishnu, the preserving god of the Hindoo triad. The Sālagrām is the only stone idol among the Hindoos that is *essentially sacred*, and entitled to divine honours without the ceremonies of consecration.<sup>5</sup> It is everywhere held most

any other plant at present worshipped in India. . . . It is to be found in almost every respectable household throughout India. It is a small shrub, not too big to be cultivated in a good-sized flower-pot, and often placed in rooms. Generally, however, it is planted in the courtyard of a well-to-do man's house, with a space round it for reverential circumambulation. In real fact the Tulasī is *par excellence* a domestic divinity, or rather, perhaps, a woman's divinity." (M. Williams, *Religious Thought and Life in India*, p. 333.)

<sup>1</sup> The fossil ammonites found in India include at least fifteen species. They occur between Trichinopoly and Pondicherry as well as in the Himalayan rocks. They are particularly abundant in the river Gandak, which rises near Dhauligiri in Nepāl, and falls into the Ganges near Patna. The upper course of this river is consequently called Sālagrāmī. Various forms of the fossils are supposed to represent various *avatārs* of Vishnu. (Balfour's *Cyclopædia*, s.v. Ammonite, Gandak, Salagrama ; M. Williams, *Religious Thought and Life in India*, pp. 69, 349.)

<sup>2</sup> The author writes "Himmalah." The current spelling Himalaya is correct, but the word should be pronounced Himālaya. It means "abode of snow."

<sup>3</sup> The north-eastern corner of the Punjāb, an elevated valley along the course of the Spiti or the Li river, a tributary of the Satlaj.

<sup>4</sup> Fossils of the genus Belemnites and related genera are common, like the ammonites, near Trichinopoly, as well as in the Himalaya.

<sup>5</sup> This statement is not quite correct. The pebbles representing the Linga of Siva, called Bāna-linga, or Vāna-linga, and apparently of

sacred. During the war against Nepāl,<sup>1</sup> Captain B—, who commanded a reconnoitring party from the division in which I served, one day brought back to camp some four or five Sālagrāms, which he had found at the hut of some priest within the enemy's frontier. He called for a large stone and hammer, and proceeded to examine them. The Hindoos were all in a dreadful state of consternation, and expected to see the earth open and swallow up the whole camp, while he sat calmly cracking *their gods* with his hammer, as he would have cracked so many walnuts. The Tulasi is a small sacred shrub (*Ocimum sanctum*), which is a metamorphosis of Sitā, the wife of Rāma, the seventh incarnation of Vishnu.

This little *pebble* is every year married to this little *shrub*; and the high priest told me that on the present occasion the procession consisted of eight elephants, twelve hundred camels, four thousand horses, all mounted and elegantly caparisoned. On the leading elephant of this *cortège*, and the most sumptuously decorated, was carried the *pebble god*, who was taken to pay his bridal visit (barāt) to the little *shrub goddess*. All the ceremonies of a regular marriage are gone through; and, when completed, the bride and bridegroom are left to repose together in the temple of Ludhaura<sup>2</sup> till the next season. "Above a hundred thousand people," the priest said, "were present at the ceremony this year at the Rājā's invitation, and feasted upon his bounty."<sup>3</sup>

white quartz, which are found in the Nerbudda river, enjoy the same distinction. "Both are held to be of their own nature pervaded by the special presence of the deity, and need no consecration. Offerings made to these pebbles—such, for instance, as Bilwa leaves laid on the white stone of Vishnu—are believed to confer extraordinary merit." (M. Williams, *Religious Thought and Life in India*, p. 69.)

<sup>1</sup> In 1814-1816.

<sup>2</sup> "Sadora" in author's text, which seems to be a misprint for Ludora or Ludhaura.

<sup>3</sup> The Tulasi shrub is sometimes married to an image of Krishna, instead of to the sālagrāma, in Western India. (M. Williams,

The old man and I got into a conversation upon the characters of different governments, and their effects upon the people; and he said that bad governments would sooner or later be always put down by the deity; and quoted this verse, which I took down with my pencil.

“Tulasi, gharib na satae,  
Buri gharib ki hai;  
Maru khal ke phunk se  
Lohā bhasm ho jae.”

“Oh, Rājā Tulasi! oppress not the poor; for the groans of the wretched bring retribution from heaven. The contemptible skin (in the smith’s bellows) in time melts away the hardest iron.”<sup>1</sup>

On leaving our tents in the morning, we found the ground all round white with hoar frost, as we had found it for several mornings before;<sup>2</sup> and a little canary bird, one

*Religious Thought and Life in India*, page 334). Compare the account of the marriage between the mango-tree and the jasmine, ante, Chapter V, p. 38.

<sup>1</sup> These Hindi verses are very incorrectly printed, and very loosely rendered by the author. The translation of the text, after necessary emendation, is :—“Tulasi, oppress not the poor; evil is the lot of the poor. From the blast of the dead hide iron becomes ashes.” Mr. W. Crooke informs me that the verses are found in the Kabirkī Sakhī, and are attributable to Kabir Dās, rather than to Tulasi Dās. But the authorship of such verses is very uncertain. Mr. Crooke further observes that the lines as given in the text do not scan, and that the better version is :—

“Durbal ko na sataiye,  
Jaki māti hai;  
Mūē khal ke swāns se  
Sār bhasm ho jae.”

Sār means iron. The author was, of course, mistaken in supposing the poet Tulasi Dās to be a Rājā. As usual in Hindi verse, the poet addresses himself by name.

<sup>2</sup> Such slight frosts are common in Bundelkhand, especially near the rivers, in January, but only last for a few mornings. They often cause great damage to the more delicate crops. The weather becomes hot in February.

of the two which travelled in my wife's palankeen, having, by the carelessness of the servants been put upon the top without any covering to the cage, was killed by the cold, to her great affliction. All attempts to restore it to life by the warmth of her bosom were fruitless.

On the 7th<sup>1</sup> we came nine miles to Bamhauri over a soil still basaltic, though less rich, reposing upon syenite, which frequently rises and protrudes its head above the surface, which is partially and badly cultivated, and scantily peopled. The silent signs of bad government could not be more manifest. All the extensive plains, covered with fine long grass, which is rotting in the ground from want of domestic cattle or distant markets. Here, as in every other part of Central India, the people have a great variety of good spontaneous, but few cultivated, grasses. They understand the character and qualities of these grasses extremely well. They find some thrive best in dry, and some in wet seasons; and that of inferior quality is often prized most because it thrives best when other kinds cannot thrive at all, from an excess or a deficiency of rain. When cut green they all make good hay, and have the common denomination of "sahia." The finest of these grasses are two which are generally found growing spontaneously together, and are often cultivated together—"kēl" and "musēl;" the third "parwana;" fourth "bhawār," or "gūniār;" fifth "sainā."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> December, 1835.

<sup>2</sup> "Musēl" is a very sweet-scented grass, highly esteemed as fodder. It belongs to the genus *Anthistiria*; the species is either *cimicina* or *prostrata*. "Bhawār" is probably the "bhaunr" of Edgeworth's list, *Anthistiria scandens*. I cannot identify the other grasses named in the text. The haystacks in Bundēlkhand are a pleasant sight to English eyes. Edgeworth's list of plants found in the Bāndā district, as revised by Messrs. Waterfield and Atkinson, is given in *North-West Provinces Gazetteer*, vol. i, p.p. 78-86.

## CHAPTER XX

### The Men-Tigers.

RĀM CHAND RĀO, commonly called the Sarimant, chief of Deori,<sup>1</sup> here overtook me. He came out from Sāgar to visit me at Dhamoni,<sup>2</sup> and, not reaching that place in time, came on after me. He held Deori under the Peshwā, as the Sāgar chief held Sāgar, for the payment of the public establishments kept up by the local administration. It yielded him about ten thousand a year, and, when we took possession of the country, he got an estate in the Sāgar district, in rent-free tenure, estimated at fifteen hundred a year. This is equal to about six thousand pounds a year in England. The tastes of native gentlemen lead them always to expend the greater part of their incomes in the wages of trains of followers of all descriptions, and in horses, elephants, &c.; and labour and the subsistence of labour are about four times cheaper in India than in England. By the breaking up of public establishments, and consequent diminution of the local demand for agricultural produce, the value of land throughout all Central India, after the termination of the Mahrātha war in 1817,

<sup>1</sup> Deorī, in the Sāgar district, about forty miles S.E. of Sāgar. In 1767, the town and attached tract called the Panj Mahāl, were bestowed by the Peshwā, rent free, on Dhōndo Dattātraya, a Marāthā pundit, ancestor of the author's friend. The Panj Mahāl were finally made part of British territory by the treaty with Sindhia in 1860. The title Sarimant appears to be a popular pronunciation of the Sanskrit *srīmant* or *srīmān*, "fortunate."

<sup>2</sup> *Ante*, Chapter XVI, p. 134. The name is here erroneously printed Dhamoree in the author's text.

fell by degrees thirty per cent. ; and, among the rest, that of my poor friend the Sarimant. While I had the civil charge of the Sāgar district in 1831 I represented this case of hardship ; and Government, in the spirit of liberality which has generally characterized their measures in this part of India, made up to him the difference between what he actually received and what they had intended to give him ; and he has ever since felt grateful to me.<sup>1</sup> He is a very small man, not more than five feet high, but he has the handsomest face I have almost ever seen, and his manners are those of the most perfect native gentleman. He came to call upon me after breakfast, and the conversation turned upon the number of people that had of late been killed by tigers between Sāgar and Deori, his ancient capital, which lies about midway between Sāgar and the Nerbudda river.

One of his followers, who stood beside his chair, said<sup>2</sup> that "when a tiger had killed one man he was safe, for the spirit of the man rode upon his head, and guided him from all danger. The spirit knew very well that the tiger would be watched for many days at the place where he had committed the homicide, and always guided him off to some other more secure place, when he killed other men without any risk to himself. He did not exactly know why the spirit of the man should thus befriend the beast that had killed him ; but," added he, "there is a mischief inherent in spirits ; and the better the man the more mischievous is his ghost, if means are not taken to put him to rest." This is the popular and general belief throughout India ; and it is supposed that the only sure mode of destroying a tiger who has killed many people is to begin by making offerings to the spirits of his victims, and thereby

<sup>1</sup> He had good reason for his gratitude, inasmuch as the depression in rents was merely temporary.

<sup>2</sup> An Indian chief is generally accompanied into the room by a confidential follower, who frequently relieves his master of the trouble of talking, and answers on his behalf all questions.

depriving him of their valuable services.<sup>1</sup> The belief that men are turned into tigers by eating of a root is no less general throughout India.

The Sarimant, on being asked by me what he thought of the matter, observed "there was no doubt much truth in what the man said : but he was himself of opinion that the tigers which now infest the wood from Sāgar to Deorī were of a different kind—in fact, that they were neither more nor less than men turned into tigers—a thing which took place in the woods of Central India much more often than people were aware of. The only visible difference between the two," added the Sarimant, "is that the metamorphosed tiger has *no tail*, while the *bora*, or ordinary tiger, has a very long one. In the jungle about Deori," continued he, "there is a root, which, if a man eat of, he is converted into a tiger on the spot ; and if, in this state, he can eat of another, he becomes a man again—a melancholy instance of the former of which," said he, "occurred, I am told, in my own father's family when I was an infant. His washerman, Raghu, was, like all washermen, a great drunkard ; and, being seized with a violent desire to ascertain what a man felt in the state of a tiger, he went one day to the jungle and brought home two of these roots, and desired his wife to stand by with one of them, and the instant she saw him assume the tiger shape, to thrust it into his mouth. She consented, the washerman ate his root, and became instantly a tiger ; but his wife was so terrified at the sight of her husband in this shape that she ran off

<sup>1</sup> When Agrippina, in her rage with her son Nero, threatens to take her stepson, Britannicus, to the camp of the Legion, and there assert his right to the throne, she invokes the spirit of his father, whom she had poisoned, and the manes of the Silani, whom she had murdered. "Simul attendere manus, aggerere probra; consecratum Claudiū, infernos Silanorum manes invocare, et tota invita fari nova." —(Tacitus, lib. xviii, sec. 14.) [W. H. S.] The quotation is from the Annals. Another reading of the concluding words is "et tota irrita facinora," which gives much better sense. In the author's text "aggerere" is printed "aggere."

with the antidote in her hand. Poor old Raghu took to the woods, and there ate a good many of his old friends from neighbouring villages ; but he was at last shot, and recognized from the circumstance of his *having no tail*. You may be quite sure," concluded Sarimant, "when you hear of a tiger without a tail, that it is some unfortunate man who has eaten of that root, and of all the tigers he will be found the most mischievous."

How my friend had satisfied himself of the truth of this story I know not, but he religiously believes it, and so do all his attendants and mine ; and, out of a population of thirty thousand people in the town of Sāgar, not one would doubt the story of the washerman if he heard it.

I was one day talking with my friend the Rājā of Maihar,<sup>1</sup> on the road between Jubbulpore and Mirzapore, on the subject of the number of men who had been lately killed by tigers at the Katrā Pass on that road,<sup>2</sup> and the best means of removing the danger. "Nothing," said the Rājā, "could be more easy or more cheap than the destruction of these tigers, if they were of the ordinary sort ; but the tigers that kill men by wholesale, as these do, are, you may be sure, men themselves converted into tigers by the force of their *science*, and such animals are of all the most unmanageable."

"And how is it, Rājā Sāhib, that these men convert themselves into tigers ?"

"Nothing," said he, "is more easy than this to persons who have once acquired the science, but how they learn it, or what it is, we unlettered men know not."

"There was once a high priest of a large temple, in this very valley of Maihar, who was in the habit of getting him-

<sup>1</sup> A small principality, detached from the Pannā State. Its chief town is about one hundred miles N.E. of Jubbulpore, on the route from Allahabad to Jubbulpore. The state is now traversed by the East Indian Railway. It is under the superintendence of the Political Agent of Baghēlkhand, resident at Riwā.

<sup>2</sup> This pass is sixty-three miles S.E. of Allahabad, on the road from that city to Riwā.

self converted into a tiger by the force of this science, which he had thoroughly acquired. He had a necklace, which one of his disciples used to throw over his neck the moment the tiger's form became fully developed. He had, however, long given up the practice, and all his old disciples had gone off on their pilgrimages to distant shrines, when he was one day seized with a violent desire to take his old form of the tiger. He expressed the wish to one of his new disciples, and demanded whether he thought he might rely on his courage to stand by and put on the necklace. "Assuredly you may," said the disciple, "such is my faith in you, and in the God we serve, that I fear nothing." The high priest upon this put the necklace into his hand with the requisite instructions, and forthwith began to change his form. The disciple stood trembling in every limb, till he heard him give a roar that shook the whole edifice, when he fell flat upon his face, and dropped the necklace on the floor. The tiger bounded over him, and out of the door, and infested all the roads leading to the temple for many years afterwards."

"Do you think, Rājā Sāhib, that the old high priest is one of the tigers at the Katrā Pass?"

"No, I do not; but I think they may be all men who have become imbued with a little too much of the high priest's *science*—when men once acquire this science they can't help exercising it, though it be to their own ruin, and that of others."

"But, supposing them to be ordinary tigers, what is the simple plan you propose to put a stop to their depredations, Rājā Sāhib?"

"I propose," said he, "to have the spirits that guide them propitiated by proper prayers and offerings; for the spirit of every man or woman who has been killed by a tiger rides upon his head, or runs before him, and tells him where to go to get prey, and to avoid danger. Get some of the Gonds, or wild people from the jungles, who are well skilled in these matters—give them ten or twenty

rupees, and bid them go and raise a small shrine, and there sacrifice to these spirits. The Gonds will tell them that they shall on this shrine have regular worship, and good sacrifices of fowls, goats, and pigs, every year at least, if they will but relinquish their offices with the tigers and be quiet. If this is done, I pledge myself," said the Rājā, "that the tigers will soon get killed themselves, or cease from killing men. If they do not, you may be quite sure that they are not ordinary tigers, but men turned into tigers, or that the Gonds have appropriated all you gave them to their own use, instead of applying it to conciliate the spirits of the unfortunate people."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> These myths are based on the well-known facts that man-eating tigers are few, and exceptionally wary and cunning. The conditions which predispose a tiger to man-eating have been much discussed. It seems to be established that the animals which seek human prey are generally, though not invariably, those which, owing to old wounds or other physical defects, are unable to attack with confidence the stronger animals. The conversations given in the text are excellent illustrations of the mode of formation of modern myths, and of the kind of reasoning which satisfies the mind of the unconscious myth-maker.

The text may be compared with the following passage from the *Journey through the Kingdom of Oudh* (vol. i, p. 124) : "I asked him (the Rājā of Balrāmpur), whether the people in the Tarāi forest were still afraid to point out tigers to sportsmen. 'I was lately out with a party after a tiger,' he said, 'which had killed a cowherd, but his companions refused to point out any trace of him, saying that their relative's spirit must be now riding upon his head, to guide him from all danger, and we should have no chance of shooting him. We did shoot him, however,' said the Rājā exultingly, 'and they were all afterwards very glad of it. The tigers in the Tarāi do not often kill men, sir, for they find plenty of deer and cattle to eat.' "

## CHAPTER XXI

Burning of Deorī by a Freebooter—A Suttee.

SARIMANT had been one of the few who escaped from the flames which consumed his capital of Deorī in the month of April 1813, and were supposed to have destroyed thirty thousand souls. I asked him to tell me how this happened, and he referred me to his attendant, a learned old pundit, Rām Chand, who stood by his side, as he was himself, he said, then only five years of age, and could recollect nothing of it.

“Mardān Singh,” said the pundit, “the father of Rājā Arpan Singh, whom you saw at Seorī, was then our neighbour, reigning over Garhā Kotā;<sup>1</sup> and he had a worthless nephew, Zālim Singh, who had collected together an army of five thousand men, in the hope of getting a little principality for himself in the general scramble for dominion incident on the rise of the Pindhāris and Amīr Khān,<sup>2</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> A fortress, twenty-five miles east of Sāgar, captured by a British force under General Watson in October 1818. For Seorī and Raja Arjun Singh see *ante* p.p. 137, 139.

<sup>2</sup> Amīr Khān, a leader of predatory horse, has been justly described as “one of the most atrocious villains that India ever produced.” He first came into notice in 1804, as an officer in Holkar’s service, and in the following year opposed Lord Lake at Bharatpur. A treaty made with him in 1817 put an end to his activity. The Pindhāris were organized bands of mounted robbers, who desolated Northern and Central India during the period of anarchy which followed the dissolution of the Moghal empire. They were associated with the Marāthās in the war which terminated with the capture of Asīrgarh in

the destruction of all balance of power among the great sovereigns of Central India. He came to attack our capital, which was an emporium of considerable trade, and the seat of many useful manufactures, in the expectation of being able to squeeze out of us a good sum to aid him in his enterprise. While his troops blocked up every gate, fire was, by accident, set to the fence of some man's garden within. There had been no rain for six months ; and everything was so much dried up that the flames spread rapidly ; and, though there was no wind when they began, it soon blew a gale. The Sarimant was then a little boy with his mother in the fortress, where she lived with his father<sup>1</sup> and nine other relations. The flames soon extended to the fortress, and the powder-magazine blew up. The house in which they lived was burned down, and every soul, except the lieutenant [*sic*] himself, perished in it. His mother tried to bear him off in her arms, but fell down in her struggle to get out with him and died. His nurse, Tulsi Kurmin,<sup>2</sup> snatched him up, and ran with him outside of the fortress to the bank of the river, where she made him over unhurt to Harirām, the Mārwārī merchant.<sup>3</sup>

April 1819. In the same year the Pindhārī forces ceased to exist as a distinct and recognized body.

“ My father was an Afghān, and came from Kandahar :  
He rode with Nawāb Amir Khan in the old Maratha war :  
From the Dekhan to the Himalay, five hundred of one clan,  
They asked no leave of prince or chief as they swept thro’ Hindusthan.”

(Sir A. Lyall, *The Old Pindaree*; in “Verses written in India,” London, 1889.)

<sup>1</sup> Named Govind Rāo. The proper name of the Sarimant was Rāmchand Rāo. (*C. P. Gazetteer*.)

<sup>2</sup> Kurmin is the feminine of Kurmī, the name of a widely-spread and most industrious agricultural caste, closely connected, at least in Bundēlkhand, with the similar Lodhi caste.

<sup>3</sup> Mārwār, or Jodhpur, is one of the leading states in Rājputāna. It supplies the rest of India with many of the keenest merchants and bankers.

He was mounted on a good horse, and, making off across the river, he carried him safely to his friends at Gaurjhāmar ; but poor Tulsi the Kurmin fell down exhausted when she saw her charge safe, and died.

"The wind appeared to blow in upon the poor devoted city from every side ; and the troops of Zālim Singh, who at first prevented the people from rushing out at the gates, made off in a panic at the horrors before them. All our establishments had been driven into the city at the approach of Zālim Singh's troops ; and scores of elephants, hundreds of camels, and thousands of horses and ponies perished in the flames, besides twenty-five thousand souls. Only about five thousand persons escaped out of thirty thousand, and these were reduced to beggary and wretchedness by the loss of their dearest relations and their property. At the time the flames first began to spread, an immense crowd of people had assembled under the fortress on the bank of the Sonār river to see the widow of a soldier burn herself. Her husband had been shot by one of Zālim Singh's soldiers in the morning ; and before midday she was by the side of his body on the funeral pile. People, as usual, begged her to tell them what would happen, and she replied, 'the city will know in less than four hours' ; in less than four hours the whole city had been reduced to ashes ; and we all concluded that, since the event was so clearly foretold, it must have been decreed by God."<sup>1</sup>

"No doubt it was," said Sarīmant ; "how could it otherwise happen? Do not all events depend upon his will? Had it not been his will to save me, how could poor Tulsi the Kurmin have carried me upon her shoulders through such a scene as this, when every other member of our family perished ?"

"No doubt," said Rām Chand, "all these things are



<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, Chapter IV, p. 28, for remarks on the supposed prophetic gifts of satī women.

brought about by the will of God, and it is not for us to ask why."<sup>1</sup>

I have heard this event described by many other people, and I believe the account of the old pundit to be a very fair one.

One day, in October 1833, the horse of the district surgeon, Doctor Spry, as he was mounting him, reared, fell back with his head upon a stone, and died upon the spot. The doctor was not much hurt, and the little Sarimant called a few days after, and offered his congratulations upon his narrow escape. The cause of so quiet a horse rearing at this time, when he had never been known to do so before, was discussed ; and he said that there could be no doubt that the horse, or the doctor himself, must have seen some *unlucky face* before he mounted that morning—that he had been in many places in his life, but in none where a man was liable to see so many *ugly* or *unfortunate faces* ; and, for his part, he never left his house till an hour after sunrise, lest he should encounter them.<sup>2</sup>

Many natives were present, and every one seemed to consider the Sarimant's explanation of the cause quite satisfactory and philosophical. Some days after, Spry was going down to sleep in the bungalow where the accident happened. His native assistant and all his servants came and prayed that he would not attempt to sleep in the bungalow, as they were sure the horse must have been frightened by a ghost, and quoted several instances of ghosts appearing to people there. He, however, slept in the bungalow, and, to their great astonishment, saw no ghost and suffered no evil.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Such feelings of resignation to the Divine Will, or fate, are common alike to Hindoos and Musalmāns.

<sup>2</sup> "One of a wife's duties should be to keep all bad omens out of her husband's way, or manage to make him look at something lucky, in the early morning. . . . . Different lists of inauspicious objects are given, which, if looked upon in the early morning, might cause disaster." (M. Williams, *Religious Thought and Life in India*, p. 397.)

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Spry died in 1842, and his estate was administered by the author. The doctor's works are described *ante*, p. 120, note.

## CHAPTER XXII

Interview with the Rājā who marries the stone to the shrub—Order of the Moon and the Fish.

ON the 8th,<sup>1</sup> after a march of twelve miles, we reached Tehrī, the present capital of the Rājā of Orchhā.<sup>2</sup> Our road lay over an undulating surface of soil composed of the detritus of the syenitic rock, and poor, both from its quality and want of depth. About three miles from our last territory we entered the boundary of the Orchhā Rājā's territory, at the village of Aslōn, which has a very pretty little fortified castle, built upon ground slightly elevated in the midst of an open grass plain.

This, and all the villages we have lately passed, are built upon the bare back of the syenitic rock, which seems to rise to the surface in large but gentle swells, like the broad waves of the ocean in a calm after a storm. A great difference appeared to me to be observable between the minds and manners of the people among whom we were now travelling, and those of the people of the Sāgar and Nerbudda territories. They seemed here to want the urbanity and intelligence we find among our subjects in the latter quarters.

The apparent stupidity of the people when questioned upon points the most interesting to them, regarding their

<sup>1</sup> December, 1835.

<sup>2</sup> The state of Orchhā, also known as Tehrī or Tīkamgarh, situated to the south of the Jhānsi district, is the oldest and the highest in rank of the Bundēla principalities. The town of Tehrī is seventy-two miles north-west of Sāgar. The town of Orchhā, founded in A.D. 1531, is 131 miles north of Sāgar, and about forty miles from Tehrī. Tīkamgarh is the fort of Tehrī.

history, their agriculture, their tanks, and temples, was most provoking ; and their manners seemed to me more rude and clownish than those of people in any other part of India I had travelled over. I asked my little friend the Sarimant, who rode with me, what he thought of this.

"I think," said he, "that it arises from the harsh character of the government under which they live ; it makes every man wish to appear a fool, in order that he may be thought a beggar and not worth the plundering."

"It strikes me, my friend Sarimant, that their government has made them in reality the beggars and the fools that they appear to be."

"God only knows," said Sarimant ; "certain it is that they are neither in mind nor in manners what the people of our districts are."

The Rājā had no notice of our approach till intimation of it reached him at Ludhaura, the day before we came in. He was there resting, and dismissing the people after the ceremonies of the marriage between the Salag्रām and the Tulasi. Ludhaura is twenty-seven miles north-west of Tehrī, on the opposite side from that on which I was approaching. He sent off two men on camels with a "kharitā" (letter)<sup>1</sup>, requesting that I would let him know my movements, and arrange a meeting in a manner that might prevent his appearing wanting in respect and hospitality ; that is, in plain terms, which he was too polite to use, that I would consent to remain one stage from his capital, till he could return and meet me half-way, with all due pomp and ceremony. These men reached me at Bamhaurī,<sup>2</sup> a distance of thirty-nine miles, in the evening,

<sup>1</sup> A kharitā is a letter enclosed in a bag of rich brocade, contained in another of fine muslin. The mouth is tied with a string of silk, to which hangs suspended the great seal, which is a flat round mass of sealing-wax, with the seal impressed on each side of it. This is the kind of letter which passes between natives of great rank in India, and between them and the public functionaries of Government. [W. H. S.]

<sup>2</sup> *Ante*, Ch. XIX, p. 151.

and I sent back a kharitā which reached him by relays of camels before midnight. He set out for his capital to receive me, and, as I would not wait to be met half-way in due form, he reached his palace, and we reached our tents at the same time, under a salute from his two brass field-pieces.

We halted at Tehrī on the 9th, and about eleven o'clock the Rājā came to pay his visit of congratulation, with a magnificent *cortège* of elephants, camels, and horses, all mounted and splendidly caparisoned, and the noise of his band was deafening. I had had both my tents pitched, and one of them handsomely fitted up, as it always is, for occasions of ceremony like the present. He came to within twenty paces of the door on his elephant, and from its back, as it sat down, he entered his splendid litter, without alighting on the ground.<sup>1</sup> In this vehicle he was brought to my tent door, where I received him, and, after the usual embraces, conducted him up through two rows of chairs, placed for his followers of distinction and my own, who are always anxious to assist in ceremonies like these.

At the head of this lane we sat upon chairs placed across, and facing down the middle of the two rows; and we conversed upon all the subjects usually introduced on such occasions, but more especially upon the august ceremonies of the marriage of the Sālagrām with the Tulasī, in which his highness had been so *piously* engaged at Ludhaura.<sup>2</sup> After he had sat with me an hour and a half

<sup>1</sup> The Rājā's unwillingness to touch the ground is an example of a very wide-spread and primitive belief. "Two of those rules or taboos by which . . . the life of divine kings or priests is regulated. The first is . . . that the divine personage may not touch the ground with his foot." This prohibition applies to the Mikado of Japan and many other sacred personages. "The second rule is that the sun may not shine upon the sacred person." This second rule explains the use of the umbrella as a royal appendage in India and Burma. (Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, Vol. II. pp. 224, 225.)

<sup>2</sup> *Ante*, Ch. XIX, p. 147.

he took his leave, and I conducted him to the door, whence he was carried to his elephant in his litter, from which he mounted without touching the ground.

This litter is called a "nālkī." It is one of the three great insignia which the Mogul Emperors of Delhi conferred upon independent princes of the first class, and could never be used by any person upon whom, or upon whose ancestors, they had not been so conferred. These were the nālkī, the order of the Fish, and the fan of the peacock's feathers. These insignia could be used only by the prince who inherited the sovereignty of the one on whom they had been originally conferred. The order of the Fish, or Mahī Marātib, was first instituted by Khusrū Parviz, King of Persia, and grandson of the celebrated Naushirvān the Just. Having been deposed by his general, Bahrām, Khusrū fled for protection to the Greek emperor, Maurice, whose daughter, Shirīn, he married, and he was sent back to Persia, with an army under the command of Narses, who placed him on the throne of his ancestors in the year A.D. 591.<sup>1</sup> He ascertained from his

<sup>1</sup> During the time he remained the guest of the Emperor he resided at Hierapolis, and did not visit Constantinople. The Greeks do not admit that Shirīn was the daughter of Maurice, though a Roman by birth, and a Christian by religion. The Persians and Turks speak of her as the Emperor's daughter [W. H. S.]. Khusrū Pārvīz (Eberwiz), or Khusrū II., reigned as King of Persia from A.D. 591 to 628. In the course of his wars he took Jerusalem, and reduced Egypt, and a large part of northern Africa, extending for a time the bounds of the Persian empire to the Aegean and the Nile. Khusrū I., surnamed Naushirvān, or (more correctly) Anushirvān, reigned from A.D. 531 to 579. His successful wars with the Romans, and his vigorous internal administration captivated the Oriental imagination, and he is generally spoken of as Adil, or The Just. His name has become proverbial, and to describe a superior as rivalling Naushirvān in justice is a commonplace of flattery. The prophet Muhammad was born during his reign, and was proud of the fact. The alleged expedition of Naushirvān into India is discredited by the best modern writers. Gibbon tells the story of the wars between the two Khusrūs and the Romans in his forty-sixth chapter, and a critical history of the reigns of both Khusrū (Khosrau) I. and Khusrū II. will be found in

astrologer, Araz Khushasp, that when he ascended the throne the moon was in the constellation of the Fish, and he gave orders to have two balls made of polished steel, which were to be called Kaukabas (planets),<sup>1</sup> and mounted on long poles. These two planets, with large fish made of gold, upon a third pole in the centre, were ordered to be carried in all regal processions immediately after the king, and before the prime minister, whose *cortège* always followed immediately after that of the king. The two kaūkabas are now generally made of copper, and plated, and in the shape of a jar, instead of quite round as at first ; but the fish is still made of gold. Two planets are always considered necessary to one fish, and they are still carried in all processions between the prince and his prime minister.

The court of this prince Khusrū Pārvīz was celebrated Professor Rawlinson's *Seventh Great Oriental Monarchy* (London, 1876). European authors have, until recently, generally written the name Khusrū in its Greek form as Chosroes. The name of Shirīn is also written Sira.

"With the name of Shirin and the rock of Bahistun the Persians have associated one of those poetic romances so dear to the national genius. Ferhad, the most famous sculptor of his time, who was very likely employed by Chosroes II. to execute these bas-reliefs, is said in the legend to have fallen madly in love with Shirīn, and to have received a promise of her from the king, if he would cut through the rock of Behistun, and divert a stream to the Kermanshah plain. The lover set to work, and had all but completed his gigantic enterprise (of which the remains, however interpreted, are still to be seen), when he was falsely informed by an emissary from the king of his lady's death. In despair he leaped from the rock, and was dashed to pieces. The legend of the unhappy lover is familiar throughout the East, and is used to explain many traces of rock-cutting or excavation as far east as Beluchistan." (*Persia and the Persian Question*, by the Hon. George N. Curzon, M.P. London, 1892 ; Vol. I, p. 562, note. See also Malcolm's *History of Persia*, Vol. I, p. 129.)

<sup>1</sup> Kaukab in Arabic means "a star." Steingass (*Persian Dictionary*) defines Kaukaba as "a polished steel ball suspended to a long pole, and carried as an ensign before the king ; a star of gold, silver, or tinsel, worn as ornament or sign of rank ; a concourse of people ; a royal train, retinue, cavalcade ; splendour."

throughout the East for its splendour and magnificence ; and the chaste love of the poet Farhad for his beautiful queen Shirīn is the theme of almost as many poems in the East as that of Petrarch's for Laura is in the West. Nūh Samāni, who ascended the throne of Persia after the Sassanians,<sup>1</sup> ascertained that the moon was in the sign Leo at the time of his accession, and ordered that the gold head of a lion should thenceforward accompany the fishes, and the two balls, in all royal processions. The Persian order of knighthood is, therefore, that of the Fish, the Moon, and the Lion, and not the Lion and Sun, as generally supposed. The emperors of the house of Taimūr in Hindustan assumed the right of conferring the order upon all whom they pleased, and they conferred it upon the great territorial sovereigns of the country without distinction as to religion. He only who inherits the sovereignty can wear the order, and I believe no prince would venture to wear or carry the order who was not generally reputed to have received the investiture from one of the emperors of Delhi.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Yezdegird III. (Isdigerd), the last of the Sassanians, was defeated in A.D. 641 at the battle of Nahavend by the Arab Nomān, general of the Khalif Omar, and driven from his throne. The supremacy of the Khalifs over Persia lasted till A.D. 1258. The subordinate Samāni dynasty ruled over Khurāsān, Seistān, Balkh, and the countries of Trans-Oxiana in the tenth century. Two of the princes of this line were named Nūh, or Noah. The author probably refers to the better known of the two, Amir Nūh II. (Malcolm, *History of Persia*, edition of 1829, Vol. I, pp. 158-166).

<sup>2</sup> The poor old blind emperor, Shāh Alam, when delivered from the Marāthās in 1803 by Lord Lake, did all he could to show his gratitude by conferring on his deliverer honours and titles, and among them the "Mahi Maratib." The editor has been unable to discover the source of the author's very improbable story of the origin of the Persian order of knighthood. Malcolm, an excellent authority, gives the following very different account :— " Their sovereigns have, for many centuries, preserved as the peculiar arms of the country, <sup>e</sup> the sign or figure of Sol in the constellation of Leo ; and this device, a lion couchant and the sun rising at his back, has not only been sculptured upon their palaces<sup>f</sup> and embroidered upon their banners,<sup>g</sup>

As I could not wait another day, it was determined that I should return his visit in the afternoon ; and about four o'clock we set out upon our elephant, Lieutenant Thomas, Sarimant, and myself, attended by all my troopers and those of Sarimant. We had our silver-stick men with us ; but has been converted into an Order,<sup>b</sup> which in the form of gold and silver medals, has been given to such as have distinguished themselves against the enemies of their country.<sup>i</sup>

*Note e.* The causes which led to the sign of Sol in Leo becoming the arms of Persia cannot be distinctly traced, but there is reason to believe that the use of this symbol is not of very great antiquity. We meet with it upon the coins of one of the Seljukian princes of Iconium ; and, when this family had been destroyed by Hulākū [A.D. 1258], the grandson of Chengiz, that prince, or his successors, perhaps adopted this emblem as a trophy of their conquest, whence it has remained ever since among the most remarkable of the royal insignia. A learned friend, who has a valuable collection of Oriental coins, and whose information and opinion have enabled me to make this conjecture, believes that the emblematical representation of Sol in Leo was first adopted by Ghiās-ud-din Kai Khusrū bin Kaikobād, who began to reign A.H. 634, A.D. 1236, and died A.H. 642, A.D. 1244 ; and this emblem, he adds, is supposed to have reference either to his own horoscope, or to that of his queen, who was a princess of Georgia.

*Note f.* Hanway states, Vol. I., p. 199, that over the gate which forms the entrance of the palace built by Shāh Abbās the Great [A.D. 1586 to 1628] at Ashrāf, in Mazenderan, are "the arms of Persia, being a lion, and the sun rising behind it."

*Note g.* The emblem of the Lion and Sun is upon all the banners given to the regular corps of infantry lately formed. They are presented to the regiments with great ceremony. A müllāh, or priest, attends, and implores the divine blessing on them.

*Note h.* This order, with additional decorations, has been lately conferred upon several ministers and representatives of European Governments in alliance with Persia.

*Note i.* The medals which have been struck with this symbol upon them have been chiefly given to the Persian officers and men of the regular corps, who have distinguished themselves in the war with the Russians. An English officer, who served with these troops, informs me that those on whom these medals have been conferred are very proud of this distinction, and that all are extremely anxious to obtain them" (*History of Persia*, ed. 1829, Vol. II., p. 406).

In Mr. Curzon's figure the lion is standing, not "couchant," as stated by Malcolm, and grasps a scimitar in his off forepaw.

but still all made a sorry figure compared with the splendid *cortége* of the Rājā. We dismounted at the foot of the stairs leading to the Rājā's hall of audience, and were there met by his two chief officers of state, who conducted us to the entrance of the hall, when we were received by the Rājā himself, who led us up through two rows of chairs laid out exactly as mine had been in the morning. In front were assembled a party of native comedians, who exhibited a few scenes of the insolence of office in the attendants of great men, and the obtrusive importunity of place-seekers, in a manner that pleased us much more than a dance would have done. Conversation was kept up very well, and the visit passed off without any feeling of ennui, or anything whatever to recollect with regret. The ladies looked at us from their apartments through gratings, and without our being able to see them very distinctly. We were anxious to see the tombs of the late Rājā, the elder brother of the present, who lately died, and that of his son, which are in progress in a very fine garden outside the city walls, and, in consequence, we did not sit above half an hour. The Rājā conducted us to the head of the stairs, and the same two officers attended us to the bottom, and mounted their horses, and attended us to the tombs.

After the dust of the town raised by the immense crowd that attended us, and the ceremonies of the day, a walk in this beautiful garden was very agreeable, and I prolonged it till dark. The Rājā had given orders to have all the cisterns filled during our stay, under the impression that we should wish to see the garden; and, as soon as we entered, the *jets d'eau* poured into the air their little floods from a hundred mouths. Our old cicerone told us that, if we would take the old capital of Orchhā in our way, we might there see the thing in perfection, and amidst the deluges of the rains of Sāwān and Bhādon (July and August) see the lightning and hear the thunder. The Rājās of this, the oldest principality in Bundēlkhand, were

all formerly buried or burned at the old capital of Orchhā, even after they had changed their residence to Tehrī. These tombs over the ashes of the Rājā, his wife, and son, are the first that have been built at Tehrī, where their posterity are all to repose in future.

## CHAPTER XXIII

The Rājā of Orchhā—Murder of his many Ministers.

THE present Rājā, Mathurā Dās, succeeded his brother Bikramājīt, who died in 1834. He had made over the government to his only son, Rājā Bahādur, whom he almost adored ; but, the young man dying some years before him, the father resumed the reins of government, and held them till his death. He was a man of considerable capacity, but of a harsh and unscrupulous character. His son resembled him ; but the present Rājā is a man of mild temper and disposition, though of weak intellect. The fate of the last three prime ministers will show the character of the Rājā and his son, and the nature of their rule.

The minister at the time the old man made over the reins of government to his son was Khānjū Purōhit.<sup>1</sup> Wishing to get rid of him a few years after, this son, Rājā Bahādur, employed Muhrām Singh, one of his feudal Rājpūt barons, to assassinate him. As a reward for this service he received the seals of office ; and the Rājā confiscated all the property of the deceased, amounting to four lakhs of rupees,<sup>2</sup> and resumed the whole of the estates held by the family.

The young Rājā died soon after ; and his father, when he resumed the reins of government, wishing to remove the new minister, got him assassinated by Gambhir Singh,

<sup>1</sup> A purōhit is a Brahman, who is a family priest.

<sup>2</sup> Four hundred thousand rupees, worth at that time more than forty thousand pounds sterling.

another feudal Rājpūt baron, who, as his reward, received in his turn the seals of office. This man was a most atrocious villain, and employed the public establishments of his chief to plunder travellers on the high road. In 1833 his followers robbed four men, who were carrying treasure to the amount of ten thousand rupees from Sāgar to Jhānsī through Tehrī, and intended to murder them ; but, by the sagacity of one of the party, and a lucky accident, they escaped, made their way back to Sāgar, and complained to the magistrate.<sup>1</sup> The<sup>2</sup> minister discovered the nature of their burdens as they lodged at Tehrī on their way, and sent after them a party of soldiers, with orders to put them in the bed of a rivulet that separated the territory of Orchhā from that of the Jhānsī Rājā. One of the treasure party discovered their object ; and, on reaching the bank of the rivulet in a deep grass jungle, he threw down his bundle, dashed unperceived through the grass, and reached a party of travellers whom he saw ascending a hill about half a mile in advance. The myrmidons of the minister, when they found that one had escaped, were afraid to murder the others, but took their treasure. In spite of great obstacles, and with much danger to the families of three of those men, who resided in the capital of Tehrī, the magistrate of Sāgar brought the crime home to the minister, and the Rājā, anxious to avail himself of the occasion to fill his coffers, got him assassinated. The Rājā was then about eighty years of age, and his minister was a strong, athletic, and brave man. One morning while he was sitting with him in private conversation, the former pretended a wish to drink some of the water in which his household god had been washed (the ‘chandan mirt’),<sup>3</sup> and begged the minister

<sup>1</sup> The magistrate was the author.

<sup>2</sup> “That” in author’s text.

<sup>3</sup> The water of the Ganges, with which the image of the god Vishnū has been washed, is considered a very holy draught, fit for princes. That with which the image of the god Siva, alias Mahādēo, is washed must not be drunk. The popular belief is that in a dispute between him and his wife, Pārvatī, alias Kālī, she cursed the person that should

to go and fetch it from the place where it stood by the side of the idol in the court of the palace. As a man cannot take his sword before the idol, the minister put it down, as the Rājā knew he would, and going to the idol, prostrated himself before it preparatory to taking away the water. In that state he was cut down by Bihārī,<sup>1</sup> another feudal Rājpūt baron, who aspired to the seals, and some of his friends, who had been placed there on purpose by the Rājā. He obtained the seals by his service, and, as he was allowed to place one brother in command of the forces, and to make another chamberlain, he hoped to retain them longer than any of his predecessors had done. Gambhir Singh's brother, Jhujhār Singh, and the husband of his sister, hearing of his murder, made off, but were soon pursued and put to death. The widows were all three put into prison, and all the property and estates were confiscated. The moveable property amounted to three lakhs of rupees.<sup>2</sup> The Rājā boasted to the Governor-General's representative in Bundēlkhand of this act of retributive justice, and pretended that it was executed merely as a punishment for the robbery; but it was with infinite diffi-

thenceforward dare to drink of the water that flowed over his images on earth. The river Ganges is supposed to flow from the top-knot of Siva's head, and no one would drink of it after this curse, were it not that the sacred stream is supposed to come first from the heel of Vishnu, the Preserver. All the little images of Siva, that are made out of stones taken from the bed of the Nerbudda river, are supposed to be absolved from this curse, and water thrown upon them can be drunk with impunity. [W. H. S.] The natural emblems of Siva, the *bāna-linga* quartz pebbles found in the Nerbudda, have already been referred to in the note to Chapter XIX. *ante*, p. 148. In the Marāthā country the "household gods" generally comprise five sacred symbols, namely, the *sāla-grāma* stone of Vishnu, the *bāna-linga* of Siva, a metallic stone representing the female principle in nature (Sakti), a crystal representing the sun, and a red stone representing Ganesh, the remover of obstacles. The details of the tiresome ritual observed in the worship of these objects occupy pages 412 to 416 of Monier Williams' *Religious Thought and Life in India*.

<sup>1</sup> "Beearee" in author's text.

<sup>2</sup> Then worth more than thirty thousand pounds sterling.

culty the merchants could recover from him any share of the plundered property out of that confiscated. The Rājā alleged that, according to our *rules*, the chief within whose boundary the robbery might have been committed, was obliged to make good the property. On inspection, it was found that the robbery was perpetrated upon the very boundary line, and "in spite of pride, in erring reason's spite," the Jhānsī Rājā was made to pay one-half of the plundered treasure.

The old Rājā, Bikramājīt, died in June, 1834; and, though his death had been some time expected, he no sooner breathed his last than charges of 'dīnāī,' slow poison, were got up, as usual, in the zenana (seraglio).

Here the widow of Rājā Bahādur, a violent and sanguinary woman, was supreme; and she persuaded the present Rājā, a weak old man, to take advantage of the funeral ceremonies to avenge the death of his brother. He did so; and Bihārī, and his three brothers, with above fifty of his relations, were murdered. The widows of the four brothers were the only members of all the families left alive. One of them had a son four months old; another one of two years; the four brothers had no other children. Immediately after the death of their husbands, the two children were snatched from their mothers' breasts, and threatened with instant death unless their mothers pointed out all their ornaments and other property. They did so; and the spoilers having got from them property to the amount of one hundred and fifty thousand rupees, and been assured that there was no more, threw the children over the high wall, by which they were dashed to pieces. The poor widows were tendered as wives to four sweepers, the lowest of all low castes; but the tribe of sweepers would not suffer any of its members to take the widows of men of such high caste and station as wives, notwithstanding the tempting offer of five hundred rupees as a present, and a village in rent-free tenure.<sup>1</sup> I secured a promise while

<sup>1</sup> On the customs of the sweeper caste, see *ante*, Chapter VIII, p. 55.

at Tehri that these poor widows should be provided for, as they had, up to that time, been preserved by the good feeling of a little community of the lowest of castes, on whom they had been bestowed as a punishment worse than death, inasmuch as it would disgrace the whole class to which they belonged, the Parihār Rājpūts.<sup>1</sup>

Tehri is a wretched town, without one respectable dwelling-house tenanted beyond the palace, or one merchant, or even shopkeeper of capital and credit. There are some tolerable houses unoccupied and in ruins ; and there are a few neat temples built as tombs, or cenotaphs, in or around the city, if city it can be called. The stables and accommodations for all public establishments seem to be all in the same ruinous state as the dwelling-houses. The revenues of the state are spent in feeding Brahmans and religious mendicants of all kinds ; and in such idle ceremonies as those at which the Rājā and all his court have just been assisting—ceremonies which concentrate for a few days the most useless of the people of India, the dēvotee followers (Bairāgis) of the god Vishnu, and tend to no purpose, either useful or ornamental, to the state or to the people.

This marriage of a *stone* to a *shrub*, which takes place every year, is supposed to cost the Rājā, at the most moderate estimate, three lakhs of rupees a year, or one fourth of his annual revenue.<sup>2</sup> The highest officers of which his government is composed receive small beggarly salaries, hardly more than sufficient for their subsistence ; and the money they make by indirect means they dare not spend like gentlemen, lest the Rājā might be tempted to take their lives in order to get hold of it. All his feudal barons are of the same tribe as himself, that is, Rājpūts ;

<sup>1</sup> The Parihārs were the rulers of Bundelkhand before the Chandels. The chief of Uchhahara belongs to this clan.

<sup>2</sup> Wealthy Hindoos, throughout India, spend money in the same ceremonies of marrying the stone to the shrub. [W. H. S.] Three lakhs of rupees were then worth thirty thousand pounds sterling or more.

but they are divided into three clans—Bundēlas, Pawārs, and Chandēls. A Bundēla cannot marry a woman of his own clan, he must take a wife from the Pawārs or Chandēls; and so of the other two clans—no member of one can take a wife from his own clan, but must go to one of the other two for her. They are very much disposed to fight with each other, but not less are they disposed to unite against any third party, not of the same tribe. Braver men do not, I believe, exist than the Rājpūts of Bundēlkhand, who all carry their swords from their infancy.<sup>1</sup>

It may be said of the Rājpūts of Mālwa and Central India generally, that the Mogul Emperors of Delhi made the same use of them that the Emperors of Germany and the Popes made of the military chiefs and classes of Europe during the middle ages. Industry and the peaceful arts being reduced to agriculture alone under bad government or no government at all, the land remained the only thing

<sup>1</sup> The numerous clans, more or less devoted to war, grouped together under the name of Rājpūts (literally “king’s sons”), are in reality of multifarious origin, and include representatives of many races. They are the Kshatriyas of the law-books, and are still often called Chhattī. In some parts of the country the word Thākur is more familiar as their general title. Thirty-six clans are considered as specially pure-blooded and are called, at any rate in books, the “royal races.” All the clans follow the custom of exogamy. The Chandēls (Chandella) ruled Bundēlkhand from the ninth to the thirteenth centuries. Their capital was Mahoba, now a station on the Midland Railway. The Bundēlas became prominent at a later date, and attained their greatest power under Chhatarsāl (*circa* A.D. 1671–1735). Their territory is now known as Bundēlkhand. The country so designated is not an administrative division. It is partly in the North-Western Provinces, and partly in the Central Provinces, and partly in Native States. It is bounded on the north by the Jumna; on the north and west by the Chambal river; on the south by the Central Provinces, and on the south and east by Rīwā and the Kaimūr hills. The traditions both of the Bundēlas and Chandellas show that there is a strain of the blood of the earlier, so-called aboriginal, races in both clans. The Pawār (Pramara) clan ranks high, but is now of little political importance. (See *N. W. P. Gazetteer*, vol. vii, p. 68.)

worth appropriating ; and it accordingly became appropriated by those alone who had the power to do so—by the Hindoo military classes collected around the heads of their clans, and powerful in their union. These held it under the paramount power on the feudal tenure of military service, as militia ; or it was appropriated by the paramount power itself, who let it out on allodial tenure to peaceful peasantry. The one was the *Zamīndārī*, and the other the *Mālguzārī* tenure of India.<sup>1</sup>

The military chiefs, essentially either soldiers or robbers, were continually fighting, either against each other, or against the peasantry, or public officers of the paramount power, like the barons of Europe ; and that paramount power, or its delegates, often found that the easiest way to crush one of these refractory vassals was to put him, as such men had been put in Germany, to *the ban of the empire*, and offer his lands, his castles, and his wealth to the victor. This victor brought his own clansmen to occupy the lands and castles of the vanquished ; and, as these were the only things thought worth living for, the change commonly involved the utter destruction of the former occupants. The new possessors gave the name of their leader, their clan, or their former place of abode, to their new possession, and the tract of country over which they spread. Thus were founded the *Bundēlas*, *Pawārs*, and *Chandēls* upon the ruin of the *Chandēls* of *Bundēl-*

<sup>1</sup> The paramount power often assigned a portion of its reserved lands in “*Jāgir*” to public officers for the establishments they required for the performance of the duties, military or civil, which were expected from them. Other portions were assigned in rent-free tenure for services already performed, or to favourites ; but, in both cases, the rights of the village or land-owner, or allodial proprietors, were supposed to be unaffected, as the government was presumed to assign only its own claim to a certain portion as revenue. [W. H. S.] The term “*ryotwar*” (*raiyatwār*) is commonly used to designate the system under which the cultivators hold their lands direct from the State. The subject of tenures is further discussed by the author in Chapters XV and XVII of Volume II.

khand, the Baghēlas in Baghēlkhand, or Riwā, the Kachhwāhās, the Sakarwārs, and others along the Chambal river, and throughout all parts of India.<sup>1</sup>

These classes have never learnt anything, or considered anything worth learning, but the use of the sword ; and a Rājpūt chief, next to leading a gang of his own on great enterprises, delights in nothing so much as having a gang or two under his patronage for little ones.

There is hardly a single chief of the Hindoo military class in the Bundēlkhand or Gwālior territories, who does not keep a gang of robbers of some kind or other, and consider it as a very valuable and legitimate source of revenue ; or who would not embrace with cordiality the leader of a gang of assassins by profession who should bring him home from every expedition a good horse, a good sword, or a valuable pair of shawls, taken from their victims. It is much the same in the kingdom of Oudh, where the lands are for the most part held by the same Hindoo military classes, who are in a continual state of war with each other, or with the government authorities. Three-fourths of the recruits for native infantry regiments are from this class of military agriculturists of Oudh, who have been trained up in this school of contest ; and many of the lads, when they enter our ranks, are found to have marks of the cold steel upon their persons. A braver set of men is hardly anywhere to be found ; or one trained up with finer feelings of devotion towards the power whose salt they eat.<sup>2</sup> A good

<sup>1</sup> For elaborate comparisons between the Rājpūt policy and the feudal system of Europe Tod's *Rājasthān* may be consulted. The parallel is not really so close as it appears to be at first sight. In some respects the organization of the Highland clans is more similar to that of the Rājpūts than the feudal system is. The Chambal river rises in Mālwā, and, after a course of some five hundred and seventy miles, falls into the Jumna forty miles below Etāwa. The statement in the text concerning the succession of clans is confused. The ruling family of Riwā still belongs to the Baghēl clan. The Mahārāja of Jaipur (Jeypore) is a Kachchhwāha.

<sup>2</sup> The barbarous habit of alliance and connivance with robber-gangs National  
for the Arts.

many of the other fourth of the recruits for our native infantry are drawn from among the Ujaini Rājpūts, or Rājpūts from Ujain,<sup>1</sup> who were established many generations ago in the same manner at Bhojpur on the bank of the Ganges.<sup>2</sup>

is by no means confined to Rājpūt nobles and landholders. Men of all creeds and castes yield to the temptation and magistrates are sometimes startled to find that Honorary Magistrates, Members of District Boards, and others of apparently the highest respectability, are the abettors and secret organizers of robber bands. A recent example of this fact was discovered in the Meerut and Muzaffarnagar districts of the North-Western Provinces in 1890 and 1891. In this case the wealthy supporters of the banditti were Jāts and Muhammadans.

The unfortunate condition of Oudh previous to the annexation is vividly described in the author's *Journey through the Kingdom of Oude*. Some districts of the kingdom, especially Hardoi, are still tainted by the old lawlessness.

The remarks on the fine feelings of devotion shown by the sepoys must now be read in the light of the events of the mutiny. Since that time the army has been reorganized, and depends much less on Oudh for its recruits than it did in the author's day.

<sup>1</sup> Ujain (Ujjain, Oojeyn) is a very ancient city, on the river Sipra, in Mālwa, in the dominions of Sindhia, the chief of Gwālior.

<sup>2</sup> Bhajpore in the author's text. The town referred to may be Bhojpur in the Shāhābād district. The name is common.

## CHAPTER XXIV

Corn Dealers—Scarcities—Famines in India.

NEAR Tehri we saw the people irrigating a field of wheat from a tank by means of a canoe, in a mode quite new to me. The surface of the water was about three feet below that of the field to be watered. The inner end of the canoe was open, and placed to the mouth of a gutter leading into the wheat-field. The outer end was closed, and suspended by a rope to the outer end of a pole, which was again suspended to cross-bars. On the inner end of this pole was fixed a weight of stones sufficient to raise the canoe when filled with water; and at the outer end stood five men, who pulled down and sank the canoe into the water as often as it was raised by the stones, and emptied into the gutter. The canoe was more curved at the outer end than ordinary canoes are, and seemed to have been made for the purpose. The lands round the town generally were watered by the Persian wheel; but, where it [*scil. the water*] is near the surface, this [*scil. the canoe arrangement*] I should think a better method.<sup>1</sup>

On the 10th<sup>2</sup> we came on to the village of Bilgai, twelve miles over a bad soil, badly cultivated; the hard syenitic

<sup>1</sup> Irrigation by means of a “dug out” canoe used as a lever is commonly practised in many parts of the country. The author gives a rough sketch, which is not worth reproduction. The Persian wheel is suitable for use in wide-mouthed wells. It may be described as a mill-wheel with buckets on the circumference, which are filled and emptied as the wheel revolves. It is worked by bullock power acting on a rude cog-wheel.

<sup>2</sup> December, 1835.

rock rising either above or near to the surface all the way—in some places abruptly, in small hills, decomposing into large rounded boulders—in others slightly and gently, like the backs of whales in the ocean—in others, the whole surface of the country resembled very much the face of the sea, not after, but really in, a storm, full of waves of all sizes, contending with each other “in most admired disorder.” After the dust of Tehri, and the fatiguing ceremonies of its court, the quiet morning I spent in this secluded spot under the shade of some beautiful trees, with the surviving canary singing, my boy playing, and my wife sleeping off the fatigues of her journey, was to me most delightful. Henry was extremely ill when we left Jubbulpore; but the change of air, and all the other changes incident to a march, have restored him to health.

During the scarcity of 1833 two hundred people died of starvation in this village alone;<sup>1</sup> and were all thrown into one large well, which has, of course, ever since remained closed. Autumn crops chiefly are cultivated; and they depend entirely on the sky for water, while the poor people of the village depend upon the returns of a single season for subsistence during the whole year. They lingered on in the hope of aid from above till the greater part had become too weak from want of food to emigrate. The Rājā gave half-a-crown to every family;<sup>2</sup> but this served merely to kindle their hopes of more, and to prolong their misery. Till the people have a better government they can never be secure from frequent returns of similar calamities. Such security must depend upon a greater variety of crops, and better means of irrigation; better roads to bring supplies over from distant parts which have not suffered from the same calamities; and greater means

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 1833 corresponds to the year 1890 of the *Vikrama Samvat*, or era, current in Bundēlkhand. Some years ago the editor found this great famine still remembered as that of the year '90.

<sup>2</sup> Half-a-crown seems to be used in this passage as a synonym for the rupee, now (1893) worth less than half the half-crown.

in reserve of paying for such supplies when brought—things that can never be hoped for under a government like this, which allows no man the free enjoyment of property.

Close to the village a large wall has been made to unite two small hills, and form a small lake; but the wall is formed of the rounded boulders of the syenitic rock without cement, and does not retain the water. The land which was to have formed the bed of the lake is all in tillage; and I had some conversation with the man who cultivated it. He told me that the wall had been built with the money of *sin*, and not the money of *piety* (*pāp kē paisā sē, na pun kē paisā sē banā*), that the man who built it must have laid out his money with a *worldly*, and not a *religious* mind (*nīyat*); that on such occasions men generally assembled Brahmans and other deserving people, and fed and clothed them, and thereby *consecrated* a great work, and made it acceptable to God, and he had heard from his ancestors that the man who had built this wall had failed to do this; that the construction could never, of course, answer the purpose for which it was intended—and that the builder's name had actually been forgotten, and the work did him no good either in this world or the next. This village, which a year or two ago was large and populous, is now reduced to two wretched huts inhabited by two very miserable families.

Bundēlkhand suffers more often and more severely from the want of seasonable showers of rain than any other part of India; while the province of Mālwa, which adjoins it on the west and south, hardly ever suffers at all.<sup>1</sup> There is a

<sup>1</sup> Bundēlkhand seems to be the meeting place of the east and west monsoons, and the moist current is, in consequence, often feeble and variable. The country suffered again from famine in 1861 and 1877, but not so severely as in 1833. In northern Bundēlkhand a canal from the Betwa river has been constructed, but is of only very limited use. The peculiarities of the soil and climate forbid the wide extension of irrigation. For the prevention of acute famine in this region the chief reliance must be on improved communications. The country

couplet, which, like all other good couplets on rural subjects, is attributed to Sahdēo [Sahadeva], one of the five demigod brothers of the Mahābhārata, to this effect:—“If you hear not the thunder on such a night, you, father, go to Mālwa, I to Guzerāt;”—that is, there will be no rain, and we must seek subsistence where rains never fail, and the harvests are secure.

The province of Mālwa is well studded with hills and groves of fine trees, which intercept the clouds as they are wasted by the prevailing westerly winds, from the Gulf of Cambay to the valley of the Ganges, and make them drop their contents upon a soil of great natural powers, formed chiefly from the detritus of the decomposing basaltic rocks, which cap and intersect these hills.<sup>1</sup>

During the famine of 1833, as on all similar occasions, grain of every kind, attracted by high prices, flowed up in large streams from this favoured province towards Bundēlkhand; and the population of Bundēlkhand, as usual in such times of dearth and scarcity, flowed off towards Mālwa against the stream of supply, under the assurance that the nearer they got to the source, the greater would be their chance of employment and subsistence. Every village had its numbers of the dead and the dying; and the roads were all strewed with them; but they were mostly concentrated upon the great towns and civil and military stations, where subscriptions were open[ed] for their support, by both the European and native communities. The funds arising from these subscriptions lasted till the rains had set fairly in, when all able-bodied persons could easily find employment in tillage among the agricultural communities of villages around. After the rains have

has recently been opened up by the Indian Midland and other railways.

<sup>1</sup> The influence of trees on climate is undoubted, but the author in this passage probably ascribes too much power to the groves of Mālwa. On the formation of the black soil see note to Chapter XIV, *ante*, p. 114.

fairly set in, the sick and helpless only should be kept concentrated upon large towns and stations, where little or no employment is to be found ; for the oldest and youngest of those who are able to work can then easily find employment in weeding the cotton, rice, sugar-cane, and other fields under autumn crops, and in preparing the lands for the reception of the wheat, gram,<sup>1</sup> and other spring seeds ; and get advances from the farmers, agricultural capitalists,<sup>2</sup> and other members of the village communities, who are all glad to share their superfluities with the distressed, and to pay liberally for the little service they are able to give in return.

It is very unwise to give from such funds what may be considered a *full rate* of subsistence to able-bodied persons, as it tends to keep concentrated upon such points vast numbers who would otherwise be scattered over the surface of the country among the village communities, who would be glad to advance them stock and the means of subsistence upon the pledge of their future services when the season of tillage commences. The rate of subsistence should always be something less than what the able-bodied person usually consumes, and can get for his labour in the field. For the sick and feeble this rate will be enough, and the healthy and able-bodied, with unimpaired appetites, will seek a greater rate by the offer of their services among the farmers and cultivators of the surrounding country. By this precaution, the mass of suffering will be gradually diffused over the country, so as best to receive what the country can afford to give for its relief. As soon as the rains set in, all the able-bodied men, women, and children,

<sup>1</sup> The word in the author's text is "grain," which is a misprint for "gram" (*Cicer arietinum*), a pulse, also known as chick-pea, and very largely grown in Bundelkhand. "Gram" is a corruption of the Portuguese word for grain, and, like many other Portuguese words, has passed into the speech of Anglo-Indians.

<sup>2</sup> "Agricultural capitalist" is a rather large phrase for the humble village money-lender, whose transactions are usually on a very small scale.

should be sent off with each a good blanket, and a rupee or two, as the funds can afford, to last them till they can engage themselves with the farmers. Not a farthing after that day should be given out, except to the feeble and sick, who may be considered as hospital patients.<sup>1</sup>

At large places, where the greater numbers are concentrated, the scene becomes exceedingly distressing, for, in spite of the best dispositions and greatest efforts on the part of government and its officers, and the European and native communities, thousands commonly die of starvation. At Sāgar, mothers, as they lay in the streets unable to walk, were seen holding up their infants, and imploring the passing stranger to take them in slavery, that they might at least live—hundreds were seen creeping into gardens, courtyards, and old ruins, concealing themselves under shrubs, grass, mats, or straw, where they might die quietly, without having their bodies torn by birds and beasts before the breath had left them. Respectable families, who left home in search of the favoured land of Mālwa, while yet a little property remained, finding all exhausted, took opium rather than beg, and husband, wife, and children died in each other's arms. Still more of such families lingered on in hope till all had been expended ; then shut their doors, took poison and died all together, rather than expose their misery, and submit to the degradation of begging. All these things I have myself known and seen ; and, in the midst of these and a hundred other harrowing scenes which present themselves on such occasions, the European cannot fail to remark the patient resignation with which the poor people submit to their fate ; and the absence of almost all those revolting acts which have characterized the famines of which he has read in other countries—such as the living

<sup>1</sup> The author's advice on the subject of famine relief is weighty and perfectly sound. It is in accordance with the policy recently formulated by the Government of India in the Famine Relief Code, the provisions of which are based on the report of the Famine Commission which followed the terrible Madras famine of 1877.

feeding on the dead, and mothers devouring their own children. No such things are witnessed in Indian famines ;<sup>1</sup> here all who suffer attribute the disaster to its real cause, the want of rain in due season ; and indulge in no feelings of hatred against their rulers, superiors, or more fortunate equals in society, who happen to live beyond the range of such calamities. They gratefully receive the superfluities which the more favoured are always found ready to share with the afflicted in India ; and, though their sufferings often subdue the strongest of all pride, the pride of caste, they rarely ever drive the people to acts of violence. The stream of emigration, guided as it always is by that of the agricultural produce flowing in from the more favoured countries, must necessarily concentrate upon the communities along the line it takes a greater number of people than they have the means of relieving, however benevolent their dispositions ; and I must say that I have never either seen or read of a nobler spirit than seems to animate all classes of these communities in India on such distressing occasions.

In such seasons of distress, we often, in India, hear of very injudicious interference with grain dealers on the part of civil and military authorities, who contrive to persuade themselves that the interest of these corn-dealers, instead of being in accordance with the interests of the people, are entirely opposed to them ; and conclude that, whenever grain becomes dear, they have a right to make them open their granaries, and sell their grain at such price as they, *in their wisdom*, may deem reasonable. If they cannot make them do this by persuasion, fine, or imprisonment,

<sup>1</sup> This statement is too general. Some examples of the horrors alluded to are recorded to have occurred in Indian famines. Cases of cannibalism occurred during the Madras famine of 1877. But it is quite true that horrors of the kind are very rare in India, and the author's praise of the patient resignation of the people is fully justified. An admirable summary of the history of Indian famines will be found in the articles "Famines" and "Food" in Balfour's *Cyclopaedia*, 3rd edition.

they cause their pits to be opened by their own soldiers or native officers, and the grain to be sold at an arbitrary price. If, in a hundred pits thus opened, they find one in which the corn happens to be damaged by damp, they come to the sage conclusion that the proprietors must be what they have all along supposed them to be, and treated as such—*the common enemies of mankind*—who, blind alike to their own interests and those of the people, purchase up the super-abundance of seasons of plenty, not to sell it again in seasons of scarcity, but *to destroy it*; and that the whole of the grain in the other ninety-nine pits, but for their *timely interference*, must have inevitably shared the same fate.<sup>1</sup>

During the season here mentioned, grain had become very dear at Sāgar, from the unusual demand in Bundēlkhand and other districts to the north. As usual, supplies of land produce flowed up from the Nerbudda districts along the great roads to the east and west of the city; but the military authorities in the cantonments would not be persuaded out of their dread of a famine. There were three regiments of infantry, a corps of cavalry, and two companies of artillery, cantoned at that time at Sāgar. They were a mile from the city, and the grain for their supply was exempted from town duties to which that for the city was liable. The people in cantonments got their supply, in consequence, a good deal cheaper than the people in the city got theirs; and none but persons belonging *bonâ fide* to the cantonments were ever allowed to purchase grain within them. When the dread of famine began, the commissariat officer, Major Gregory, apprehended that he might not be permitted to have recourse to the markets of the city in times of scarcity, since the people of the city had not been suffered to have recourse to those of the cantonments in times of plenty; but he was told by

<sup>1</sup> No European officer, military or civil, could now venture to adopt such arbitrary measures. In a Native State they might very probably be enforced.

the magistrate to purchase as much as he liked, since he considered every man as free to sell his grain as his cloth, or pots and pans, to whom he chose.<sup>1</sup> He added that he did not share in the fears of the military authorities—that he had no apprehension whatever of a famine, or when prices rose high enough, they would be sure to divert away into the city, from the streams then flowing up from the valley of the Nerbudda and the districts of Mālwa towards Bundēlkhand, a supply of grain sufficient for all.

This new demand upon the city increased rapidly the price of grain, and augmented the alarm of the people, who began to urge the magistrate to listen to their prayers, and coerce the sordid corn-dealers, who had, no doubt, numerous pits yet unopened. The alarm became still greater in the cantonments, where the commanding officer attributed all the evil to the inefficiency of the commissariat and the villany of the corn-dealers; and Major Gregory was in dread of being torn to pieces by the soldiery. Only one day's supply was left in the cantonment bazaars—the troops had become clamorous almost to a state of mutiny—the people of the town began to rush in upon every supply that was offered for sale; and those who had grain to dispose of could no longer venture to expose it. The magistrate was hard-pressed on all sides to have recourse to the old salutary method of searching for and forcibly opening the grain pits, and selling the contents at such price as might appear reasonable. The kotwāl<sup>2</sup> of the town declared that the lives of his police would be no longer safe unless this great and never-failing remedy, which had now unhappily been too long deferred, were immediately adopted.

The magistrate, who had already taken every other means of declaring his resolution never to suffer any man's granary to be forcibly opened, now issued a formal procla-

<sup>1</sup> "The magistrate" was the author himself.

<sup>2</sup> The chief police officer of a town. In the modern reorganized system he always holds the rank either of Inspector or Sub-Inspector. Under native governments he was a more important official.

mation, pledging himself to see that such granaries should be as much respected as any other property in the city—that every man might keep his grain and expose it for sale, wherever and whenever he pleased ; and expressing a hope that, as the people knew him too well not to feel assured that his word thus solemnly pledged would never be broken, he trusted they would sell what stores they had, and apply themselves without apprehension to the collecting of more.

This proclamation he showed to Major Gregory, assuring him that no degree of distress or clamour among the people of the city or the cantonments should ever make him violate the pledge therein given to the corn-dealers ; and that he was prepared to risk his situation and reputation as a public officer upon the result. After issuing this proclamation about noon, he had his police establishments augmented, and so placed and employed as to give to the people entire confidence in the assurances conveyed in it. The grain-dealers, no longer apprehensive of danger, opened their pits of grain, and sent off all their available means to bring in more. In the morning the bazaars were all supplied, and every man who had money could buy as much as he pleased. The troops got as much as they required from the city. Major Gregory was astonished and delighted. The colonel, a fine old soldier from the banks of the Indus, who had commanded a corps of horse under the former government, came to the magistrate in amazement ; every shop had become full of grain as if by supernatural agency.

“*Kāle ādmī kī akl kahān talak chalēgī ?*” said he. “ How little could a black man’s wisdom serve him in such an emergency ? ”

There was little wisdom in all this ; but there was a firm reliance upon the truth of the general principle which should guide all public officers on such occasions. The magistrate judged that there were a great many pits of grain in the town known only to their own proprietors, who were afraid to open them, or get more grain, while there was a chance of the civil authorities yielding to the clamours of

the people and the anxiety of the officers commanding the troops ; and that he had only to remove these fears, by offering a solemn pledge, and manifesting the means and the will to abide by it, in order to induce the proprietors, not only to sell what they had, but to apply all their means to the collecting of more. But it is a singular fact that almost all the officers of the cantonments thought the conduct of the magistrate in refusing to have the grain pits opened under such pressing circumstances extremely reprehensible.

Had he done so, he might have given the people of the city and the cantonments the supply at hand ; but the injury done to the corn-dealers by so very unwise a measure would have recoiled upon the public, since every one would have been discouraged from exerting himself to renew the supply, and from laying up stores to meet similar necessities in future. By acting as he did, he not only secured for the public the best exertions of all the existing corn-dealers of the place, but actually converted for the time a great many to that trade from other employments, or from idleness. A great many families, who had never traded before, employed their means in bringing a supply of grain, and converted their dwellings into corn shops, induced by the high profits and assurance of protection. During the time when he was most pressed the magistrate received a letter from Captain Robinson, who was in charge of the bazaars at Elichpur in the Hyderabad territory,<sup>1</sup> where the dearth had become even more felt than at Sāgar, requesting to know what measures had been adopted to regulate the price, and secure the supply of grain for the city and cantonments at Sāgar, since no good seemed to result from those hitherto pursued at Elichpur. He told him in reply that these things had hitherto been regulated

<sup>1</sup> Elichpur is in Berār, otherwise known as the Assigned Districts, a territory made over in Lord Dalhousie's time to British administration to defray the cost of the armed force called the Hyderabad Contingent. A cantonment of this force is at Elichpur.

at Sāgar as he thought “they ought to be regulated everywhere else, by being left entirely to the discretion of the corn-dealers themselves, whose self-interest will always prompt them to have a sufficient supply, as long as they may feel secure of being permitted to do what they please with what they collect. The commanding officer, in his anxiety to secure food for the people, had hitherto been continually interfering to coerce sales and regulate prices, and continually aggravating the evils of the dearth by so doing.” On the receipt of the Sāgar magistrate’s letter a different course was adopted ; the same assurances were given to the corn-dealers, the same ability and inclination to enforce them manifested, and the same result followed. The people and the troops were steadily supplied ; and all were astonished that so very simple a remedy had not before been thought of.

The ignorance of the first principles of political economy among European gentlemen of otherwise first-rate education and abilities in India is quite lamentable, for there are really few public officers, even in the army, who are not occasionally liable to be placed in the situations where they may, by false measures, arising out of such ignorance, aggravate the evils of dearth among great bodies of their fellow-men. A soldier may, however, find some excuse for such ignorance, because a knowledge of these principles is not generally considered to form any indispensable part of a soldier’s education ; but no excuse can be admitted for a civil functionary who is so ignorant, since a thorough acquaintance with the principles of political economy must be, and, indeed, always is considered as an essential branch of that knowledge which is to fit him for public employment in India.<sup>1</sup>

In India unfavourable seasons produce much more disastrous consequences than in Europe. In England not

<sup>1</sup> Political Economy has long been a compulsory subject for the selected candidates for the covenanted Indian Civil Service ; but the latest rules (1892) leave its study optional.

more than one-fourth of the population derive their incomes from the cultivation of the lands around them. Three-fourths of the people have incomes independent of the annual returns from those lands ; and with these incomes they can purchase agricultural produce from other lands when the crops upon them fail. The farmers, who form so large a portion of the fourth class, have stock equal in value to *four times the amount of the annual rent of their lands.* They have also a great variety of crops ; and it is very rare that more than one or two of them fail, or are considerably affected, the same season. If they fail in one district or province, the deficiency is very easily supplied to a people who have equivalents to give for the produce of another. The sea, navigable rivers, fine roads, all are open and ready at all times for the transport of the superabundance of one-quarter to supply the deficiencies of another. In India, the reverse of all this is unhappily to be found ; more than three-fourths of the whole population are engaged in the cultivation of the land, and depend upon its annual returns for subsistence.<sup>1</sup> The farmers and cultivators have none of their stock equal in value to more than *half the amount of the annual rent of their lands.*<sup>2</sup> They have a great variety of crops ; but all are exposed to the same accidents, and commonly fail at the same time. The autumn crops are sown in June and July, and ripen in October and November ; and, if seasonable showers do not fall during July, August, and September, all fail. The spring crops are sown in October and November, and ripen in March ; and, if seasonable showers do not happen to fall during December or January, all, save what are

<sup>1</sup> The census of 1891 shows that about 70 per cent. of the 287 millions inhabiting India are supported by the cultivation of the soil and the care of cattle.

<sup>2</sup> This proposition does not apply fully to Northern India at the present day. The amount of capital invested is small, but not quite so small as is stated in the text.



artificially irrigated, fail.<sup>1</sup> If they fail in one district or province, the people have few equivalents to offer for a supply of land produce from any other. Their roads are scarcely anywhere passable for wheeled carriages at *any season*, and nowhere *at all seasons*—they have nowhere a navigable canal, and only in one line a navigable river.

Their land produce is conveyed upon the backs of bullocks, that move at the rate of six or eight miles a day, and add one hundred per cent to the cost of every hundred miles they carry it in the best seasons, and more than two hundred in the worst.<sup>2</sup> What in Europe is felt merely as a *dearth*, becomes in India, under all these disadvantages, a *scarcity*, and what is there a *scarcity*, becomes here a *famine*. Tens of thousands die here of starvation, under calamities of season, which in Europe would involve little of suffering to any class. Here man does everything, and he must have his daily food or starve. In England machinery does more than three-fourths of the collective work of society in

<sup>1</sup> The times of harvest vary slightly with the latitude, being later towards the north. The cold weather rains of December and January are very variable and uncertain, and rarely last more than a few days. The spring crops depend largely on the heavy dews which occur during the cold season.

<sup>2</sup> During the sixty years which have elapsed since the famine of 1833, great changes have taken place in India, and many of the author's remarks are only partially applicable to the present time. The great canals, above all, the wonderful Ganges Canal, have protected immense areas of Northern India from the possibility of absolute famine, and Southern India has also been to a considerable, though less, extent, protected by similar works. A few new staples, of which potatoes are the most important, have been introduced. The whole system of distribution has been revolutionized by the development of railways, metalled roads, wheeled carriages, telegraphs, and navigable canals. Carriage on the backs of animals, whether bullocks, camels, or donkeys, now plays a very subordinate part in the distribution of agricultural produce. Prices are, in great measure, dependent on the rates prevailing in Liverpool, Odessa, and Chicago. Food grains now stand ordinarily at prices which, in the author's time, would have been reckoned famine rates. The changes which have taken place in England are too familiar to need comment.

the production, preparation, and distribution of man's physical enjoyments, and it stands in no need of this daily food to sustain its powers ; they are independent of the seasons ; the water, fire, air, and other elemental powers which they require to render them subservient to our use are always available in abundance.

This machinery is the great assistant of the present generation, provided for us by the wisdom and industry of the past ; wanting no food itself, it can always provide its proprietors with the means of purchasing what they require from other countries, when the harvests of their own fail. When calamities of season deprive men of employment for a time in tillage, they can, in England, commonly find it in other branches of industry, because agricultural industry forms so small a portion of the collective industry of the nation ; and because every man can, without prejudice to his status in society, take to what branch of industry he pleases. But, when these calamities of season throw men out of employment in tillage for a time in India, they cannot find it in any other branch, because agricultural industry forms so very large a portion of the collective industry of every part of the country ; and because men are often prevented by the prejudices of caste from taking to that which they can find.<sup>1</sup>

In societies constituted like that of India the trade of the corn-dealer is more essentially necessary for the welfare of the community than in any other, for it is among them that the superabundance of seasons of plenty requires most to be stored up for seasons of scarcity and if public functionaries will take upon themselves to seize

<sup>1</sup> Since the author's time the industries of cotton-pressing, cotton-spinning, and jute-spinning have sprung up and assumed in Bombay, Calcutta, Cawnpore, and a few other places, proportions which, absolutely, are large. But India is so vast that these local developments of manufactures, large though they are, seem to be as nothing when regarded in comparison with the country as a whole. India is still, and, to all appearance, always must be, essentially an agricultural country.

such stores, and sell them at their own arbitrary prices, whenever prices happen to rise beyond the rate which they in their short-sighted wisdom think just, no corn-dealer will ever collect such stores. Hitherto, whenever grain has become dear at any military or civil station, we have seen the civil functionaries urged to prohibit its egress—to search for the hidden stores, and to coerce the proprietors to the sale in all manner of ways ; and, if they do not yield to the ignorant clamour, they are set down as indifferent to the sufferings of their fellow-creatures around them, and as blindly supporting the worst enemies of mankind in the worst species of iniquity.

If those who urge them to such measures are asked whether silversmiths or linendrapers, who should be treated in the same manner as they wish the corn-dealers to be treated, would ever collect and keep stores of plate and cloth for their use, they readily answer—No ; they see at once the evil effects of interfering with the free disposal of the property of the one, but are totally blind to that which must as surely follow any interference with that of the other, whose entire freedom is of so much more vital importance to the public. There was a time, and that not very remote, when grave historians, like Smollett, could, even in England, fan the flame of this vulgar prejudice against one of the most useful classes of society. That day is, thank God, past ; and no man can now venture to write such trash in his history, or even utter it in any well-informed circle of English society ; and, if any man were to broach such a subject in an English House of Commons, he would be considered as a fit subject for a madhouse.

But some, who retain their prejudices against corn-dealers, and are yet ashamed to acknowledge their ignorance of the first principles of political economy, try to persuade themselves and their friends that, however applicable these may be to the state of society in European or Christian countries, they are not so to countries occupied

by Hindoos and Muhammadans. This is a sad delusion, and may be a very mischievous one, when indulged by public officers in India.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The author's teaching concerning freedom of trade in times of famine and the function of dealers in corn is as sound as his doctrine of famine relief. The "vulgar prejudice," which he denounces, still flourishes, and the "sad delusion," which he deplores, still obscures the truth. As each period of scarcity or famine comes round, the old cries are again heard, and the executive authorities are implored and adjured to forbid export, to fix fair prices, and to clip the profits of the corn merchant. During the Bengal famine of 1873-74, the demand for the prohibition of the export of rice was urged by men who should have known better, and Lord Northbrook is entitled to no small credit for having firmly withstood the clamour. The recent experiences of the Russian Government should be remembered when the clamour is again raised, as it will be. The principles on which the author acted in the crisis at Sāgar in 1833 should guide every magistrate who finds himself in a similar position, and should be applied with unhesitating firmness and decision.

## CHAPTER XXV

### Epidemic Diseases—Scape-goat.

IN the evening, after my conversation with the cultivator upon the wall that united the two hills,<sup>1</sup> I received a visit from my little friend the Sarimant. His fine rose-coloured turban is always put on very gracefully ; every hair of his jet-black eyebrows and mustachios seems to be kept always most religiously in the same place ; and he has always the same charming smile upon his little face, which was never, I believe, distorted into an absolute laugh or frown. No man was ever more perfectly master of what the natives call “the art of rising or sitting” (*nishisht wa barkhāst*), namely, good manners. I should as soon expect to see him set the Nerbudda on fire as commit any infringement of the *convenances* on this head established in good Indian society, or be guilty of anything vulgar in speech, sentiment, or manners. I asked him by what means it was that the old queen of Sāgar<sup>2</sup> drove out the influenza that afflicted the people so much in 1832, while he was there on a visit to me. He told me that he took no part in the ceremonies, nor was he aware of them till awoke one night by the noise, when his attendants informed

<sup>1</sup> *Ante*, Ch. XXIV, p. 182.

<sup>2</sup> Sāgar was ceded by the Peshwa in 1818, and a yearly sum of two and a half lākhs of rupees was allotted by Government for pensions to Rukmā Bāī, Vināyak Rāo, and the other officers of the Marāthā Government. A descendant of Rukmā Bāī still enjoys a pension of R. 10,000 per annum. (*C. P. Gazetteer* (1870), p. 442.) The lady referred to in the text seems to be Rukmā Bāī.

him that the queen and the greater part of the city, were making offerings to the new god, Hardaul Lāla. He found next morning that a goat had been offered up with as much noise as possible, and with good effect, for the disease was found to give way from that moment. About six years before, when great numbers were dying in his own little capital of Pithoria<sup>1</sup> from a similar epidemic, he had, he said, tried the same thing with still greater effect ; but, on that occasion, he had the aid of a man very learned in such matters. This man caused a small carriage to be made up after a plan of his own, for *a pair of scape-goats*, which were harnessed to it, and driven during the ceremonies to a wood some distance from the town, where they were let loose. From that hour the disease entirely ceased in the town. The goats never returned. "Had they come back," said Sarimant, "the disease must have come back with them ; so he took them a long way into the wood—indeed (he believed), the man, to make sure of them, had afterwards caused them to be offered up as a sacrifice to the shrine of Hardaul Lāla, in that very wood. He had himself never seen a *pūjā* (religious ceremony) so entirely and immediately efficacious as this, and much of its success was, no doubt, attributable to the *science* of the man who planned the carriage, and himself drove the pair of goats to the wood. No one had ever before heard of the plan of a pair of *scape-goats* being driven in a carriage ; but it was likely (he thought) to be extensively adopted in future."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A village about twenty miles north-west of Sāgar. The estate consists of twenty-six revenue-free villages.

<sup>2</sup> The Jewish ceremonial is described in Leviticus xvi, 20-26. After completing the atonement for the impurities of the holy place, the tabernacle, and the altar, Aaron was directed to lay "his hands upon the head of the live goat," so putting all the sins of the people upon the animal, and then to "send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness ; and the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited : and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness." The subject of *scape-goats* is discussed at length and

Sarimant's man of affairs mentioned that when Lord Hastings took the field against the Pindhāris, in 1817,<sup>1</sup> and the division of the grand army under his command was encamped near the grove in Bundēlkhand, where repose the ashes of Hardaul Lāla, under a small shrine, a cow was taken into this grove to be converted into beef for the use of the Europeans. The priest in attendance remonstrated, but in vain—the cow was killed and eaten. The priest complained, and from that day the cholera morbus broke out in the camp ; and from this central point it was, he said, generally understood to have spread all over India.<sup>2</sup> copiously illustrated by Mr. Frazer in *The Golden Bough*, Vol. II, section 15, p.p. 182–217. The author's stories in the text are quoted second-hand by Mr. Frazer.

<sup>1</sup> During the season of 1816–17 the ravages of the Pindhāris were exceptionally daring and extensive. The Governor-General, the Marquis of Hastings, organized an army in several divisions to crush the marauders, and himself joined the central division in October 1817. The operations were ended by the capture of Asīrgarh in March 1819.

<sup>2</sup> The people in the Sāgar territories used to show several decayed mango-trees in groves where European troops had encamped during the campaigns of 1816 and 1817, and declared that they had been seen to wither from the day that beef for the use of these troops had been tied to their branches. The only coincidence was in the decay of the trees, and the encamping of the troops in the groves ; that the withering trees were those to which the beef had been tied was of course taken for granted. [W. H. S.] The Hindoo veneration for the cow amounts to a passion, and its intensity is very inadequately explained by the current utilitarian explanations. During recent years an active, though absolutely hopeless, agitation has been kept up, directed against the reasonable liberty of those communities in India, who are not members of the Hindoo system. This agitation for the prohibition of cow-killing has caused some riots, and has evoked much ill-feeling. The editor had to deal with it in the Muzaffarnagar district in 1890, and had much trouble to keep the peace. The local leaders of the movement went so far as to send telegrams direct to the Government of India. Many other magistrates have had similar experiences. The authorities take every precaution to protect Hindoo susceptibilities from needless wounds, but they are equally bound to defend the lawful liberty of subjects who are not Hindoos. The Government of the North-Western Provinces has so far yielded to the

The story of the cow travelled at the same time, and the spirit of Hardaul Lāla was everywhere supposed to be riding in the whirlwind, and *directing the storm*. Temples were everywhere erected, and offerings made to appease him ; and in six years after, he had himself seen them as far as Lahore, and in almost every village throughout the whole course of his journey to that distant capital and back. He is one of the most sensible and freely spoken men that I have met with. "Up to within the last few years," added he, "the spirit of Hardaul Lāla had been propitiated only in cases of cholera morbus ; but now he is supposed to preside over all kinds of epidemic diseases, and offerings have everywhere been made to his shrine during late influenzas."<sup>1</sup>

Hindoo demands, as to prohibit cow-killing in at least one town where the practice was not fully established, but the legality and expediency of this order are both open to criticism. The administrative difficulty is much enhanced by the fact that the Indian Muhammadans profess to be under a religious obligation to sacrifice cows at the Idul Bakr festival. Cholera has been known to exist in India since the seventeenth century.

<sup>1</sup> The cultus of Hardaul is further discussed *post* in Chapter XXXI. In 1875, the editor, who was then employed in the Hamīrpur district of Bundēlkhand, published some popular Hindī songs in praise of the hero, with the following abstract of the *Legend of Hardaul* :— "Hardaul, a son of the famous Bir Singh Deo Bundēla of Orchhā, was born at Datiyā. His brother, Jhajhār Singh, suspected him of undue intimacy with his wife, and at a feast poisoned him with all his followers. After this tragedy, it happened that the daughter of Kunjāvati, the sister of Jhajhār and Hardaul, was about to be married. Kunjāvati accordingly sent an invitation to Jhajhār Singh, requesting him to attend the wedding. He refused and mockingly replied that she had better invite her favourite brother Hardaul. Thereupon she went in despair to his tomb and lamented aloud. Hardaul from below answered her cries, and said that he would come to the wedding and make all arrangements. The ghost kept his promise, and arranged the nuptials as befitted the honour of his house. Subsequently, he visited at night the bedside of Akbar, and besought the emperor to command *chābütras* to be erected and honour paid to him in every village throughout the empire, promising that, if he were duly honoured, a wedding should never be marred by

"This of course arises," I observed, "from the industry of his priests, who are now spread all over the country; and you know that there is hardly a village or hamlet in which there are not some of them to be found subsisting upon the fears of the people."

"I have no doubt," replied he, "that the cures which the people attribute to the spirit of Hardaul Lāla often arise merely from the firmness of their faith (*itikād*) in the efficacy of their offerings; and that any other ceremonies, that should give to their minds the same assurance of recovery, would be of great advantage in cases of epidemic diseases. I remember a singular instance of this," said he. "When Jeswant Rāo Holkar was flying before Lord Lake to the banks of the Hyphasis,<sup>1</sup> a poor trooper of one of his lordship's irregular corps, when he tied the grain-bag to his horse's mouth, said "Take this in the name of Jeswant Rāo Holkar, for to him you and I owe all that we have." The poor man had been suffering from an attack of ague and fever; but from that moment he felt himself relieved, and the fever never returned. At that time this

storm or rain, and that no one who first presented a share of his meal to Hardaul should ever want for food. Akbar complied with these requests, and since that time Hardaul's ghost has been worshipped in every village. He is chiefly honoured at weddings and in Baisākh (April--May), during which month the women, especially those of the lower castes, visit his *chābutra* and eat there. His *chābutra* is always built outside the village. On the day but one before the arrival of a wedding procession, the women of the family worship the gods and Hardaul, and invite them to the wedding. If any signs of a storm appears, Hardaul is propitiated with songs." (*Journal As. Soc. of Bengal*, Vol. XLIV, Part I, p. 389.) The belief that Hardaul worship and cholera had been introduced at the same time prevailed in Hamirpur, as elsewhere. The *chābutra* referred to in the above extract is a small platform built of mud or masonry.

<sup>1</sup> The Hyphasis is the Greek name for the river Biās in the Panjāb. Holkar's flight into the Panjāb occurred in 1805, and in the same year the long war with him was terminated by a treaty, much too favourable to the marauding chief. He became insane a few years later, and died in 1811.

fever prevailed more generally among the people of Hindustan than any I have ever known, though I am now an old man. The speech of the trooper and the supposed result soon spread ; and others tried the experiment with similar success, and it acted everywhere like a charm. I had the fever myself, and, though by no means a superstitious man, and certainly no lover of Jeswant Rāo Holkar, I tried the experiment, and the fever left me from that day. From that time, till the epidemic disappeared, no man, from the Nerbudda to the Indus, fed his horse without invoking the spirit of Jeswant Rāo, though the chief was then alive and well. Some one had said he found great relief from plunging into the stream during the paroxysms of the fever ; others followed the example, and some remained for half an hour at a time, and the sufferers generally found relief. The streams and tanks throughout the districts between the Ganges and Jumna became crowded, till the propitiatory offering to the spirit of the living Jeswant Rāo Holkar were [*sic*] found equally good, and far less troublesome to those who had horses that must have got their grain, whether in Holkar's name or not."

There is no doubt that the great mass of those who had nothing but their horses and their *good blades* to depend upon for their subsistence did most fervently pray throughout India for the safety of this Marāthā chief, when he fled before Lord Lake's army ; for they considered that, with his fall, the Company's dominion would become everywhere securely established, and that good soldiers would be at a discount. "*Company kē amal men kuchh rozgār nahin hai,*"—“there is no employment in the Company's dominion,” is a common maxim, not only among the men of the sword and the spear, but among those merchants who lived by supporting native civil and military establishments with the luxuries and elegancies which, under the new order of things, they have no longer the means to enjoy.

The noisy *pūjā* (worship), about which our conversation began, took place at Sāgar in April, 1832, while I was at that station. More than four-fifths of the people of the city and cantonments had been affected by a violent influenza, which commenced with a distressing cough, was followed by fever, and, in some cases, terminated in death. I had an application from the old Queen Dowager of Sāgar, who received a pension of ten thousand pounds a year from the British Government,<sup>1</sup> and resided in the city, to allow of a *noisy* religious procession to implore deliverance from this great calamity. Men, women, and children in this procession were to do their utmost to add to the noise by "raising their voices in *psalmody*," beating upon their brass pots and pans with all their might, and discharging fire-arms where they could get them; and before the noisy crowd was to be driven a buffalo, which had been purchased by a general subscription, in order that every family might participate in the merit. They were to follow it out for eight miles, where it was to be turned loose for any man who would take it. If the animal returned, the disease, it was said, must return with it, and the ceremony be performed over again. I was requested to intimate the circumstance to the officer commanding the troops in cantonments, in order that the hideous noise they intended to make might not excite any alarm, and bring down upon them the visit of the soldiery. It was, however, subsequently determined that the animal should be a goat, and he was driven before the crowd accordingly. I have on several occasions been requested to allow of such noisy *pūjās* in cases of epidemics; and the confidence they feel in their efficiency has, no doubt, a good effect.

While in civil charge of the district of Narsinghpur, in the valley of the Nerbudda, in April, 1823, the cholera morbus raged in almost every house of Narsinghpur and

<sup>1</sup> See note *ante*, p. 197.

Kandeli, situated near each other,<sup>1</sup> and one of them close to my dwelling-house and court. The European physicians lost all confidence in their prescriptions, and the people declared that the hand of God was upon them, and by appeasing Him could they alone hope to be saved.<sup>2</sup> A religious procession was determined upon ; but the population of both towns was divided upon the point whether a *silent* or a *noisy* one would be most acceptable to God. Hundreds were dying around me when I was applied to to settle this *knotty point* between the parties. I found that both in point of numbers and respectability the majority was in favour of the silent procession, and I recommended that this should be adopted. The procession took place about nine the same night, with all due ceremony ; but the advocates for noise would none of them assist in it. Strange as it may appear, the disease abated from that moment ; and the great majority of the population of both towns believed that their prayers had been heard ; and I went to bed with a mind somewhat relieved by the hope that this feeling of confidence might be useful. About one o'clock I was awoke from a sound sleep by the most hideous noise that I had ever heard ; and, not at that moment recollecting the proposal for the noisy procession, ran out of my house, in expectation of seeing both towns in flames. I found that the advocates for noise, resolving to have their procession, had assembled together about midnight ; and, apprehensive that they might be borne down by the advocates for silence and my police establish-

<sup>1</sup> Narsinghpur and Kandeli are practically one town. The government offices and houses of the European residents are in Kandeli, which is a mile east of Narsinghpur. The original name of Narsinghpur was Gadariā Khērā. The modern name is due to the erection of a large temple to Narsingha, one of the forms of Vishnu. The district of Narsinghpur lies in the Nerbudda valley, west and southwest of Jubbulpore.

<sup>2</sup> Natives still frequently refuse to employ any medicines in cases either of cholera or small-pox, supposing that the attempt to use ordinary human means is an insult to, and a defiance of, the Deity.

ment, had determined to make the most of their time, and put in requisition all the pots, pans, shells, trumpets, pistols, and muskets that they could muster. All opened at once about one o'clock ; and, had there been any virtue in discord, the cholera must soon have deserted the place, for such another hideous compound of noises I never heard. The disease, which seemed to have subsided with the silent procession before I went to bed, now returned with double violence, as I was assured by numbers who flocked to my house in terror ; and the whole population became exasperated with the leaders of the noisy faction, who had, they believed, been the means of bringing back among them all the horrors of this dreadful scourge.

I asked the Hindoo Sadar Amin, or head native judicial officer at Sāgar, a very profound Sanskrit scholar, what he thought of the efficacy of these processions in checking epidemic diseases. He said that "there could be nothing more clear than the total inefficiency of medicine in such cases ; and, when medicine failed, a man's only resource was in prayers ; that the diseases of mankind were to be classed under three general heads ;—first, those suffered for sins committed in some former births ; second, those suffered for sins committed in the present birth ; third, those merely accidental. Now," said the old gentleman, "it must be clear to every unprejudiced mind that the third only can be cured or checked by the physician." Epidemics, he thought, must all be classed under the second head, and as inflicted by the Deity for some very general sin ; consequently, to be removed only by prayers ; and, whether silent or noisy, was, he thought, matter of little importance, provided they were offered in the same spirit. I believe that, among the great mass of the people of India, three-fourths of the diseases of individuals are attributed to evil spirits and evil eyes ; and for every physician among them there are certainly ten *exorcisers*. The faith in them is very great and very general ; and, as the gift is supposed to be supernatural, it is commonly

exercised without fee or reward. The gifted person subsists upon some other employment, and *exorcises* gratis.

A child of one of our servants was one day in convulsions from its sufferings in cutting its teeth. The Civil Surgeon happened to call that morning, and he offered to lance the child's gums. The poor mother thanked him, but stated that there could be no possible doubt as to the source of her child's sufferings—that the *devil* had got into it during the night, and would certainly not be frightened out by his little lancet ; but she expected every moment my old tent-pitcher, whose exorcisms no devil of this description had ever yet been able to withstand.

The small-pox had been raging in the town of Jubbulpore for some time during one hot season that I was there, and a great many children had died from it. The severity of the disease was considered to have been a good deal augmented by a very untoward circumstance that had taken place in the family of the principal banker of the town, Khushhāl Chand. Sēwā Rām Sēth, the old man, had lately died, leaving two sons, Rām Kishan, the eldest, and Khushhāl Chand, the second. The eldest gave up all the management of the sublunary concerns of the family, and devoted his mind entirely to religious duties. They had a very fine family temple of their own, in which they placed an image of their god Vishnu, cut out of the choicest stone of the Nerbudda, and consecrated after the most approved form, and with very expensive ceremonies. This idol Rām Kishan used every day to wash with his own hands with rose-water, and anoint with precious ointments. One day, while he had the image in his arms, and was busily employed in anointing it, it fell to the ground upon the stone pavement, and one of the arms was broken. To live after such an untoward accident was quite out of the question, and poor Rām Kishan proceeded at once quietly to hang himself. He got a rope from the stable, and having tied it over the beam in the room where

he had let the god fall upon the stone pavement, he was putting his head calmly into the noose, when his brother came in, laid hold of him, called for assistance, and put him under restraint. A conclave of the priests of that sect was immediately held in the town, and Rām Kishan was told that hanging himself was not absolutely necessary ; that it might do if he would take the stone image, broken arm and all, upon his own back, and carry it two hundred and sixty miles to Benares, where resided the high priest of the sect, who would, no doubt, be able to suggest the proper measures for pacifying the god.

At this time, the only son of his brother, Khushhāl Chand, an interesting little boy of about four years of age, was extremely ill of the small-pox ; and it is a rule with Hindoos never to undertake any journey, even one of pilgrimage to a holy shrine, while any member of the family is afflicted with this disease ; they must all sit at home clothed in sackcloth and ashes. He was told that he had better defer his journey to Benares till the child should recover ; but he could neither sleep nor eat, so great was his terror, lest some dreadful calamity should befall the whole family before he could expiate his crime, or take the advice of his high priest as to the best means of doing it : and he resolved to leave the decision of the question to God Himself. He took two pieces of paper, and having caused Benares to be written upon one, and Jubbulpore upon the other, he put them both into a brass vessel. After shaking the vessel well, he drew forth that on which Benares had been written. "It is the will of God," said Rām Kishan. All the family, who were interested in the preservation of the poor boy, implored him not to set out, lest Dēvī, who presides over small-pox, should become angry. It was all in vain. He would set out with his household god ; and, unable to carry it himself, he put it into a small litter upon a pole, and hired a bearer to carry it at one end, while he supported it at the other. His brother, Khushhāl Chand, sent his second wife at the same

time with offerings for Dēvī, to ward off the effects of his brother's rashness from his child. By the time the brother had got with his god to Adhartāl, three miles from Jubbulpore, on the road to Benares, he heard of the death of his nephew ; but he seemed not to feel this slight blow in his terror of the dreadful but undefined calamity which he felt to be impending over him and the whole family, and he trotted on his road. Soon after, an infant son of their uncle died of the same disease ; and the whole town became at once divided into two parties—those who held that the children had been killed by Dēvī as a punishment for Rām Kishan's presuming to leave Jubbulpore before they recovered ; and those who held that they were killed by the God Vishnu himself, for having been so rudely deprived of one of his arms. Khushhāl Chand's wife sickened on the road, and died on reaching Mirzapore, of fever ; and, as Dēvī was supposed to have nothing to do with fevers, this event greatly augmented the advocates of Vishnu. It is a rule with the Hindoos to bury, and not to burn, the bodies of those who die of the small-pox ; "for," say they, "the small-pox is not only caused by the goddess Dēvī, but is, in fact, *Dēvī herself* ; and to burn the body of the person affected with this disease is, in reality, neither more nor less than *to burn the goddess*."

Khushhāl Chand was strongly urged to bury, and not burn, his child, particularly as it was usual with Hindoos to bury infants and children of that age, of whatever disease they might die ; but he insisted upon having his boy burned with all due pomp and ceremony, and burned he was accordingly. From that moment, it is said, the disease began to rage with increased violence throughout the town of Jubbulpore. At least one-half of the children affected had before survived ; but, from that hour, at least three out of four died ; and, instead of the condolence which he expected from his fellow-citizens, poor Khushhāl Chand, a very amiable and worthy man, received nothing but their execrations for bringing down so many calamities upon

their heads ; first, by maltreating his own god, and then by setting fire to theirs.

I had, a few days after, a visit from Gangādhar Rāo, the Sadar Amin, or head native judicial officer of this district, whose father had been for a short time the ruler of the district, under the former government ; and I asked him whether the small-pox had diminished in the town since the rains had now set in. He told me that he thought it had, but that a great many children had been taken off by the disease.<sup>1</sup>

"I understand, Rāo Sāhib, that Khushhāl Chand, the banker, is supposed to have augmented the virulence of the disease by burning his boy ; was it so ?"

"Certainly," said my friend, with a grave, long face ; "the disease was much increased by this man's folly."

I looked very grave in my turn, and he continued :—

"Not a child escaped after he had burned his boy. Such incredible folly ! To set fire to the *goddess* in the midst of a population of twenty thousand souls ; it might have brought destruction on us all !"

"What makes you think that the disease is itself the goddess ?"

"Because we always say, when any member of a family becomes attacked by the small-pox, '*Dēvī nikalī*,' that is, Dēvī has shown herself in that family, or in that individual. And the person affected can wear nothing but plain white clothing, not a silken or coloured garment, nor an ornament of any kind ; nor can he or any of his family undertake a journey, or participate in any kind of rejoicings, lest he give offence to her. They broke the arm of their god, and he drove them all mad.<sup>2</sup> The elder brother set out on a journey with it, and his nephew, cousin, and sister-in-

<sup>1</sup> Vaccination was not practised in India in those days. The practice of it is still unpopular in most places, but has extended sufficiently to check greatly the ravages of small-pox. In many municipal towns vaccination is compulsory.

<sup>2</sup> Quem deus vult perdere, prius dementat.

law fell victims to his temerity ; and then Khushhāl Chand brings down the goddess upon the whole community by burning his boy !<sup>1</sup> No doubt he was very fond of his child —so we all are—and wished to do him all honour ; but some regard is surely due to the people around us, and I told him so when he was making preparations for the funeral ; but he would not listen to reason.”

A complicated religious code, like that of the Hindoos, is to the priest what a complicated civil code, like that of the English, is to the lawyers. A Hindoo can do nothing without consulting his priest, and an Englishman can do nothing without consulting his lawyer.

<sup>1</sup> The judge cleverly combines the opinions of the adherents of both sects.

## CHAPTER XXVI

Artificial Lakes in Bundēlkhand—Hindoo, Greek, and Roman Faith.

ON the 11th<sup>1</sup> we came on twelve miles to the town of Bamhaurī, whence extends to the south-west a ridge of high and bare quartz hills, towering above all others, curling and foaming at the top, like a wave ready to burst, when suddenly arrested by the hand of Omnipotence, and turned into white stone. The soil all the way is wretchedly poor in quality, being formed of the detritus of syenitic and quartz rocks, and very thin. Bamhaurī is a nice little town,<sup>2</sup> beautifully situated on the bank of a fine lake, the waters of which preserved during the late famine the population of this and six other small towns, which are situated near its borders, and have their lands irrigated from it. Besides water for their fields, this lake yielded the people abundance of water-chesnuts<sup>3</sup> and fish. In the driest season the water has been found sufficient to supply the wants of all the people of those towns and villages, and those of all the country around, as far as the people can avail themselves of it.

This large lake is formed by an artificial bank or wall at the south-east end, which rests one arm upon the high range of quartz rocks, which run along its south-west side for several miles, looking down into the clear deep water, and forming a beautiful landscape.

From this pretty town, Ludhaura, where the great marriage had lately taken place, was in sight, and only four

<sup>1</sup> December, 1835.

<sup>2</sup> In the Orchhā State. This seems to be the same town which the author had already visited on his way to Tehrī on the 7th December. *Ante*, p. 151.

<sup>3</sup> *Ante*, p. 94, note.

miles distant.<sup>1</sup> It was, I learnt, the residence of the present Rājā of Orchhā, before the death of his brother called him to the throne. Many people were returning from the ceremonies of the marriage of "Sālagrām" with "Tulasi"; who told me that the concourse had been immense—at least one hundred and fifty thousand; and that the Rājā had feasted them all for four days during the progress of the ceremonies, but that they were obliged to defray their expenses going and coming, except when they came by special invitation to do honour to the occasion, as in the case of my little friend the Sāgar high priest, Jānkī Sewak. They told me that they called this festival the "Dhanuk jag";<sup>2</sup> and that Janakrāj, the father of Sītā, had in his possession the "dhanuk," or immortal bow of Parasnām, the sixth incarnation of Vishnu, with which he exterminated all the Kshatriyas, or original military class of India, and which required no less than four thousand men to raise it on one end.<sup>3</sup> The prince offered his daughter in marriage to any man who should bend this bow. Hundreds of heroes and demigods aspired to the hand of the fair Sītā, and essayed to bend the bow; but all in vain, till young Rām, the seventh incarnation of Vishnu,<sup>4</sup> then a lad of only ten years of age, came; and at the touch of his great toe the bow flew into a thousand pieces, which are supposed to have been all taken up into heaven. Sītā became the wife of Rām; and the popular poem of the Rāmāyana describes the abduction

<sup>1</sup> Sodora in the author's text; see *ante*, Chapter XIX, p. 147.

<sup>2</sup> "Bow-sacrifice."

<sup>3</sup> The tradition is that a prince of this military class was sporting in a river with his thousand wives, when Renuka, the wife of Jamadagni, went to bring water. He offended her, and her husband cursed the prince, but was put to death by him. His son Parasnām was no less a person than the sixth incarnation of Vishnu, who had assumed the human shape merely to destroy these tyrants. He vowed, now that his mother had been insulted, and his father killed, not to leave one on the face of the earth. He destroyed them all twenty-one times, the women with child producing a new race each time. [W. H. G. Delhi N.]

<sup>4</sup> Rāma Chandra, son of Dasaratha. —

of the heroine by the monster king of Ceylon, Rāvana, and her recovery by means of the monkey general Hanumān. Every word of this poem, the people assured me, was written, if not by the hand of the Deity himself, at least by his inspiration, which was the same thing, and it must, consequently, be true.<sup>1</sup> Ninety-nine out of a hundred among the Hindoos implicitly believe, not only every word of this poem, but every word of every poem that has ever been written in Sanskrit. If you ask a man whether he really believes any very egregious absurdity quoted from these books, he replies with the greatest *naïveté* in the world, "Is it not written in the book ; and how should it be there written if not true ?" The Hindoo religion reposes upon an entire prostration of mind, that continual and habitual surrender of the reasoning faculties, which *we* are accustomed to make occasionally. While engaged at the theatre, or in the perusal of works of fiction, we allow the scenes, characters, and incidents to pass before "our mind's eye," and move our feelings, without asking, or stopping a moment to ask whether they are real or true. There is

<sup>1</sup> When Rām set out with his army for Ceylon, he is supposed to have worshipped the little tree called "cheonkul," which stood near his capital of Ajodhya. It is a wretched little thing, between a shrub and a tree ; but I have seen a procession of more than seventy thousand persons attend their prince to the worship of it on the festival of the Dasahara, which is held in celebration of this expedition to Ceylon. [W. H. S.] "As Arjuna and his brothers worshipped the shumee-tree, the *Acacia suma*, and hung up their arms upon it, so the Hindus go forth to worship that tree on the festival of the Dasahara. They address the tree under the name of Aparajita, the invincible goddess, sprinkle it with five ambrosial liquids, the 'panchamrit,' a mixture of milk, curds, sugar, clarified butter, and honey, wash it with water, and hang garments upon it. They light lamps and burn incense before the symbol of Aparajita, make 'chandlos' upon the tree, sprinkle it with rose-coloured water, and set offerings of food before it." Balfour's *Cyclopaedia*, 3rd edition, s.v. Dasahara. The editor has been unable to identify the tree which the author calls "cheonkul," and it is not certain whether or not it is the same as the "shumee," or *Acacia suma*, of Dr. Balfour.

only this difference that, with people of education among us, even in such short intervals of illusion or *abandon*, any extravagance in acting, or flagrant improbability in the fiction, destroys the charm, breaks the spell by which we have been so mysteriously bound, stops the smooth current of sympathetic emotion, and restores us to reason and to the realities of ordinary life. With the Hindoos, on the contrary, the greater the improbability, the more monstrous and preposterous the fiction, the greater is the charm it has over their minds;<sup>1</sup> and the greater their learning in the Sanskrit the more are they under the influence of this charm. Believing all to be written by the Deity, or by his inspiration, and the men and things of former days to have been very different from the men and things of the present day, and the heroes of these fables to have been demigods, or people endowed with powers far superior to those of the ordinary men of their own day, the analogies of nature are never for a moment considered; nor do questions of probability, or possibility, according to those analogies, ever obtrude to dispel the charm with which they are so pleasantly bound. They go on through life reading and talking of these monstrous fictions, which shock the taste and understanding of other nations, without once questioning the truth of one single incident, or hearing it questioned. There was a time, and that not very distant, when it was the same in England, and in every other European nation; and there are, I am afraid, some parts of Europe where it is so still. But the Hindoo faith, so far as religious questions are concerned, is not more capacious or absurd than that of the Greeks and Romans in the days of Socrates and Cicero—the only difference is, that among the Hindoos a greater number of the questions which interest mankind are brought under the head of religion.

There is nothing in the Hindoos more absurd than the *piety* of Tiberius in offering up sacrifices in the temple, and

<sup>1</sup> Credo, quia impossibile.

before the image of Augustus ; while he was solicited by all the great cities of the empire to suffer temples to be built and sacrifices to be made to himself while still living ; or than Alexander's attempt to make a goddess of his mother while yet alive, that he might feel the more secure of being made a *god* himself after his death.<sup>1</sup> In all religions there are points at which the professors declare that *reason* must stop, and cease to be a guide to *faith*. The pious man thinks that all which he cannot comprehend or reconcile to reason in his own religion must be *above* it. The superstitions of the people of India will diminish before the spread of science, art, and literature ; and good works of history and fiction would, I think, make far greater havoc among these superstitions even than good works in any of the sciences, save the physical, such as astronomy, chemistry, &c.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This comparison is not a happy one. The elements in the Hindoo myths specially repulsive to European taste are their monstrosity, their inartistic and hideous exaggeration, their senseless accumulation of sanguinary horrors, and their childish triviality. Few of the classical myths exhibit these characteristics. The vanity of Tiberius and Alexander in believing themselves to be, or wishing to be believed, divine, has nothing in common with the grotesque imagination of Puranic Hinduism.

<sup>2</sup> The roots of Hinduism are so deeply fixed in a thick soil of custom and inherited sentiment, the growth of thousands of years, that English education has less effect than might be expected in loosening the bonds of beliefs which seem, to every one but a Hindoo, the merest superstition. Hindoos who can read English with fluency, and write it with accuracy, are often extremely devout, and Hindoo devoutness must ever appear to an outsider, even to an European as sympathetic as the author, to be no better than superstition. A Hindoo able to read English with ease has at his command all the rich stores of the knowledge of the West, but he rarely cares to taste them. Enmeshed in a web of ritual and belief which is inseparable from himself, he remains as much as ever a Hindoo, and uses his skill in English merely as an article of professional equipment. "Good works of history and fiction" do not interest him, and he usually fails to digest and assimilate the physical or biological science which is administered to him at school or college. In fact, he does not believe it. The monstrous legends of the Purāṇas continue to be for his mind the realities ; while

In the evening we went out with the intention of making an excursion on the lake, in boats that had been prepared for our reception by tying three or four fishing canoes together;<sup>1</sup> but, on reaching the ridge of quartz hills, which runs along the south-east side, we preferred moving along its summit to entering the boats. The prospect on either side of this ridge was truly beautiful. A noble sheet of clear water, about four miles long by two broad, on our right; and on our left a no less noble sheet of rich wheat cultivation, irrigated from the lake by drains passing between small breaks in the ridges of the hills. The Persian wheel is used to raise the water.<sup>2</sup> This sheet of rich cultivation is beautifully studded with mango groves and fields of sugar-cane. The lake is almost double the size of that of Sāgar, and the idea of its great utility for

the truths of science are to him phantoms, shadowy and unsubstantial, the outlandish notions of alien and casteless unbelievers. These observations are, of course, not universally true, and a few Hindoos are able to heartily accept and thoroughly assimilate the facts of history and the results of inductive science. But such Hindoos are few, very few; and it may well be doubted if it is possible for a man really to believe the amount of history and science known to an ordinary English schoolboy, and still be a devout Hindoo. The old bottles cannot contain the new wine. The Hindoo scriptures do not treat of history and science in a merely incidental way; they teach, after their fashion, both history and science formally and systematically; grammar, logic, medicine, astronomy, the history of gods and men, are all taught in books which form part of the sacred canon. Inductive science and matter-of-fact history are absolutely destructive of, and irreconcilable with, veneration for the Hindoo scriptures as authoritative and infallible guides. It is impossible, within the narrow limits of a note, to discuss the problems suggested by the author's remarks. Enough, perhaps, has been said to show that the many-rooted banyan tree of Hinduism is in little danger of overthrow from the attacks either of history or of science, not to speak of "good works of fiction."

<sup>1</sup> A 'dug-out' canoe is rather a shaky craft. When two or three are lashed together, and a native cot (*chārpāi*) is stretched across, the passenger can make himself very comfortable. The boats are poled by men standing in the stern.

<sup>2</sup> *Ante*, p. 180.

purposes of irrigation made it appear to me far more beautiful ; but my little friend the Sarimant, who accompanied us in our walk, said that "it could not be so handsome, since it had not a fine city and castle on two sides, and a fine government house on the third."

"But," said I, "no man's field is watered from that lake."

"No," replied he, "but for every man that drinks of the waters of this, fifty drink of the waters of that ; from that lake thirty thousand people get *ārām* (comfort) every day."

This lake is called Kēwlas after Kēwal Varmma, the Chandēl prince by whom it was formed.<sup>1</sup> His palace, now in ruins, stood on the top of the ridge of rocks in a very beautiful situation. From the summit, about eight miles to the west, we could see a still larger lake, called the Nandanvārā Lake, extending under a similar range of quartz hills running parallel with that on which we stood.<sup>2</sup> That lake, we were told, answered upon a much larger scale the same admirable purpose of supplying water for the fields, and securing the people from the dreadful effects of droughts. The extensive level plains through which the rivers of Central India<sup>3</sup> generally cut their way have, for

<sup>1</sup> This prince is not included in the authentic dynastic lists given in the Chandella inscriptions. He was probably a younger son, who never reigned. The principal authorities for the history of the Chandella dynasty are Sir A. Cunningham in *Reports of the Archaeological Survey of India*, Vol. II, p.p. 439-451 ; Vol. XXI, p.p. 77-90, and V. A. Smith's "Contributions to the History of Bundēlkhand," in *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. L, Part I, p. 1. Most of the great works of the dynasty date from the period A.D. 1000-1200.

<sup>2</sup> The long ridges of quartz traversing the gneiss are marked features in the scenery of Bundēlkhand.

<sup>3</sup> The author always uses the phrase Central India as a geographical expression. The phrase is generally now used to mean an administrative division, namely, the group of Native States under the Central India Agency at Indore, which deals with about 130 chiefs and rulers of various rank. Central India must not be confounded with the Central Provinces, of which the capital is Nāgpur.

the most part, been the beds of immense natural lakes;<sup>1</sup> and there rivers sink so deep into their beds, and leave such ghastly chasms and ravines on either side, that their waters are hardly ever available in due season for irrigation. It is this characteristic of the rivers of Central India that makes such lakes so valuable to the people, particularly in seasons of drought.<sup>2</sup> The river Nerbudda has been known to rise seventy feet in the course of a couple of days in the rains; and, during the season when its waters are wanted for irrigation, they can nowhere be found within that [distance] of the surface; while a level piece of ground fit for irrigation is rarely to be met with within a mile of the stream.<sup>3</sup>

The people appeared to improve as we advanced farther into Bundēlkhand in appearance, manners, and intelligence. There is a bold bearing about the Bundēlas, which at first one is apt to take for rudeness or impudence, but which in time he finds not to be so.

The employés of the Rājā were everywhere attentive, frank, and polite; and the peasantry seemed no longer inferior to those of our Sāgar and Nerbudda territories. The females of almost all the villages through which we passed came out with their "Kalas" in procession to meet us—one of the most affecting marks of respect from the peasantry for their superiors that I know. One woman carries on her head a brass jug, brightly polished, full of water; while all the other families of the village crowd

<sup>1</sup> On this lake theory see *ante*, Ch. XIV, note, p. 119.

<sup>2</sup> During a residence of six years in Bundēlkhand the editor came to the conclusion that most of the ancient artificial lakes were not constructed for purposes of irrigation. The embankments seem generally to have been built as adjuncts to palaces or temples. Many of the lakes command no considerable area of irrigable ground, and there are no traces of ancient irrigation channels. In modern times small canals have been drawn from some of the lakes.

<sup>3</sup> The desolation of the ravines of the rivers of Central India and Bundēlkhand offers a very striking spectacle, and they present to the geologist a signal example of the effects of sub-aërial denudation.

around her, and sing in chorus some rural song, that lasts from the time the respected visitor comes in sight till he disappears. He usually puts into the *Kalas* a rupee to purchase 'gur' (coarse sugar), of which all the females partake, as a sacred offering to the sex. No member of the other sex presumes to partake of it, and during the chorus all the men stand aloof in respectful silence. This custom prevails all over India, or over all parts of it that I have seen ; and yet I have witnessed a Governor-General of India, with all his suite, passing by this interesting group, without knowing or asking what it was. I lingered behind, and quietly put my silver into the jug, as if from the Governor-General.<sup>1</sup>

The man who administers the government over these seven villages in all its branches, civil, criminal, and fiscal, receives a salary of only two hundred rupees a year. He collects the revenues on the part of government ; and, with the assistance of the heads and the elders of the villages, adjusts all petty matters of dispute among the people, both civil and criminal. Disputes of a more serious character are sent to be adjusted at the capital by the Rājā and his ministers. The person who reigns over the seven villages of the lake is about thirty years of age, of the Rājpūt caste, and, I think, one of the finest young men I have ever seen. His ancestors have served the Orchhā State in the same station for seven generations ; and he tells me that he hopes his posterity will serve them [*sic*] for as many more, provided they do not forfeit their claims to do so by their infidelity or incapacity. This young man seemed to have the respect and affection of every member of the little communities of the villages through which we passed, and it was evident that he deserved their attachment. I have rarely seen any similar signs of attachment to one of our

<sup>1</sup> This pretty custom is also described in Tod's *Rājasthān* ; and is still common in Alwar, and perhaps in other parts of Rājputāna (*N.I. Notes and Queries*, Vol. II. (Dec. 1892), p. 152). The custom does not seem to be now known in the Gangetic valley.

own native officers. This arises chiefly from the circumstance of their being less frequently placed in authority among those upon whose good feelings and opinions their welfare and comfort, as those of their children, are likely *permanently* to depend. In India, under native rule, office became hereditary, because officers expended the whole of their incomes in religious ceremonies, or works of ornament and utility, and left their families in hopeless dependence upon the chief in whose service they had laboured all their lives, while they had been educating their sons exclusively with the view of serving that chief in the same capacity that their fathers had served him before them. It is in this case, and this alone, that the law of primogeniture is in force in India.<sup>1</sup> Among Muhammadans, as well as Hindoos, all property, real and personal, is divided equally among the children;<sup>2</sup> but the duties of an office will not admit of the same subdivision; and this, therefore, when hereditary, as it often is, descends to the eldest son with the obligation of providing for the rest of the family. The family consists of all the members who remain united to the parent stock, including the widows and orphans of the sons or brothers who were so up to the time of their death.<sup>3</sup>

The old "chobdār," or silver-stick bearer, who came with us from the Rājā, gets fifteen rupees a month, and his

<sup>1</sup> Principalities, and the estates of the talukdārs of Oudh also descend to the eldest son. The author states (*ante*, p. 82) that the same rule applied in his time to the small agricultural holdings in the Sāgar and Nerbudda territories.

<sup>2</sup> This statement is inexact; Hindoo daughters, as a rule, inherit nothing from their fathers; a Muhammadan daughter takes half the share of a son.

<sup>3</sup> But it is only the smaller local ministerial officers who are secure in their tenure of office under native governments; those on whose efficiency the well-being of village communities depends. The greatest evil of governments of the kind is the feeling of insecurity which pervades all the higher officers of government, and the instability of all engagements made by the government with them, and by them with the people. [W. H. S.]

ancestors have served the Rājā for several generations. The Dīwān, who has charge of the treasury, receives only one thousand rupees a year, and the Bakshi, or paymaster of the army, who seems at present to rule the state as the prime favourite, the same. These latter are at present the only two great officers of state ; and, though they are, no doubt, realizing handsome incomes by indirect means, they dare not make any display, lest signs of wealth might induce the Rājā or his successors to treat them as their predecessors in office were treated for some time past.<sup>1</sup> The Jāgīrdārs, or feudal chiefs, as I have before stated, are almost all of the same family or class as the Rājā, and they spend all the revenues of their estates in the maintenance of military retainers, upon whose courage and fidelity they can generally rely. These Jāgīrdārs are bound to attend the prince on all great occasions, and at certain intervals ; and are made to contribute something to his exchequer in tribute. Almost all live beyond their legitimate means, and make up the deficiency by maintaining upon their estates gangs of thieves, robbers, and murderers, who extend their depredations into the country around, and share the prey with these chiefs, and their officers and under-tenants. They keep them as *poachers* keep their *dogs* ; and the paramount power, whose subjects they plunder, might as well ask them for the best horse in the stable as for the best thief that lives under their protection.<sup>2</sup>

I should mention an incident that occurred during the

<sup>1</sup> *Ante*, Chapter XXIII, p. 171.

<sup>2</sup> In the Gwālior territory, the Marāthā “āmils” or governors of districts, do the same, and keep gangs of robbers on purpose to plunder their neighbours ; and, if you ask them for their thieves, they will actually tell you that to part with them would be ruin, as they are their only defence against the thieves of their neighbours. [W. H. S.] These notions and habits are by no means extinct. In October, 1892, a force of about two hundred men, cavalry and infantry, was sent into Bundelkhand to suppress robber gangs. Such gangs are constantly breaking out in that region, in most native states, and in many British districts. See *ante*, p. 178.

Rājā's visit to me at Tehri. Lieutenant Thomas was sitting next to the little Sarimant, and during the interview he asked him to allow him to look at his beautiful little gold-hilted sword. The Sarimant held it fast, and told him that he should do himself the honour of waiting upon him in his tent in the course of the day, when he would show him the sword and tell him its history. After the Rājā left me, Thomas mentioned this, and said he felt very much hurt at the incivility of my little friend ; but I told him that he was in everything he did and said so perfectly the gentleman, that I felt quite sure he would explain all to his satisfaction when he called upon him. During his visit to Thomas he apologized for not having given over his sword to him, and said, " You European gentlemen have such perfect confidence in each other, that you can, at all times, and in all situations, venture to gratify your curiosity in these matters, and draw your swords in a crowd just as well as when alone ; but, had you drawn mine from the scabbard in such a situation, with the tent full of the Rājā's personal attendants, and surrounded by a devoted and not very orderly soldiery, it might have been attended by very serious consequences. Any man outside might have seen the blade gleaming, and, not observing distinctly why it had been drawn, might have suspected treachery, and called out *to the rescue*, when we should all have been cut down—the lady, child, and all." Thomas was not only satisfied with the Sarimant's apology, but was so much delighted with him, that he has ever since been longing to get his portrait ; for he says it was really his intention to draw the sword had the Sarimant given it to him. As I have said, his face is extremely beautiful, quite a model for a painter or a statuary, and his figure, though small, is handsome. He dresses with great elegance, mostly in azure-coloured satin, surmounted by a rose-coloured turban and a waistband of the same colour. All his motions are graceful, and his manners have an exquisite polish. A greater master of all the *convenances* I have never

seen, though he is of slender capacity, and, as I have said, in stature less than five feet high.

A poor half-naked man, reduced to beggary by the late famine, ran along by my horse to show me the road, and, to the great amusement of my attendants, exclaimed that he felt exactly as if he were always falling down a well, meaning as if he were immersed in cold water. He said that the cold season was suited only to gentlemen who could afford to be well-clothed ; but, to a poor man like himself, and the great mass of people, in Bundēlkhand at least, the hot season was much better. He told me that “the late Rājā, though a harsh, was thought to be a just man ;<sup>1</sup> and that his good sense, and, above all, his *good fortune* (ikbāl) had preserved the principality entire ; but that God only, and the forbearance of the Honourable Company, could now serve it under such an imbecile as the present chief.” He seemed quite melancholy at the thought of living to see this principality, the oldest in Bundēlkhand, lose its independence. Even this poor, unclothed, and starving wretch had a feeling of patriotism, a pride of country, though that country had been so wretchedly governed, and was now desolated by a famine.

Just such a feeling had the impressed seamen who fought our battles in the great struggle. No nation has ever had a more disgraceful institution than that of the press-gang of England. This institution, if so it can be called, must be an eternal stain upon her glory—posterity will never be able to read the history of her naval victories without a blush—without reproaching her lawgivers who could allow them to be purchased with the blood of such men as those who fought for us the battles of the Nile and Trafalgar. “*England expected every man to do his duty*” on that day, but had England done her duty to every man who was on

<sup>1</sup> My poor guide had as little sympathy with the prime ministers, whom the Tehrī Rājā put to death, as the peasantry of England had with the great men and women whom Harry the Eighth sacrificed. [W. H. S.] *Ante*, p.p. 171-175.

that day to fight for her? Was not every English gentleman of the Lords and Commons a David sending his Uriah to battle?<sup>1</sup>

The intellectual stock which we require in good seamen for our navy, and which is acquired in scenes of peril "upon the high and giddy mast," is as much their property as that which other men acquire in schools and colleges; and we had no more right to seize and employ these seamen in our battles upon the wages of common, uninstructed labour, than we should have had to seize and employ as many clergymen, barristers, and physicians. When I have stood on the quarter-deck of a ship in a storm, and seen the seamen covering the yards in taking in sail, with the thunder rolling, and the lightning flashing fearfully around them—the sea covered with foam, and each succeeding billow, as it rushed by, seeming ready to sweep them all from their frail footing into the fathomless abyss below—I have asked myself, "Are men like these to be seized like common felons, torn from their wives and children as soon as they reach their native land, subject every day to the lash, and put in front of those battles on which the wealth, the honour, and the independence of the nation depend, merely because British legislators know that when there, a regard for their own personal character among their companions in danger will make them fight like Englishmen?"

<sup>1</sup> The cruel practice of impressment for the royal navy is authorized by a series of statutes extending from the reign of Philip and Mary to that of George III. Seamen of the merchant navy, and, with few exceptions, all seafaring men between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five, are liable, under the provisions of these harsh statutes, to be forcibly seized by the press-gang, and compelled to serve on board a man-of-war. The acts legalizing impressment were freely made use of during the Napoleonic wars, but have since then been little acted on, and no government at the present day could venture to use them, though they have never been repealed. The fleet sent against the Russians in 1855 was the first English fleet ever manned without recourse to forcible impressment. (See the article "Navy" in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 9th edition.)

This feeling of nationality which exists in the little states of Bundēlkhand, arises from the circumstance that the mass of the landholders are of the same class as the chief Bundēlas; and that the public establishments of the state are recruited almost exclusively from that mass. The states of Jhānsī<sup>1</sup> and Jālaun<sup>2</sup> are the only exceptions. There the rulers are Brahmans and not Rājpūts, and they recruit their public establishments from all classes and all countries. The landed aristocracy, however, there, as elsewhere, are Rājpūts—either Pawārs, Chandēls, or Bundēlas.

The Rājpūt landholders of Bundēlkhand are linked to the soil in all their grades, from the prince to the peasant, as the Highlanders of Scotland were not long ago ; and the holder of a hundred acres is as proud as the holder of a million.<sup>3</sup> He boasts the same descent, and the same exclusive possession of arms and agriculture, to which unhappily the industry of their little territories is almost exclusively confined, for no other branch can grow up among so turbulent a set, whose quarrels with their chiefs, or among each other, are constantly involving them in civil wars, which render life and property exceedingly insecure. Besides, as I have stated, their propensity to keep bands of thieves, robbers, and murderers in their baronial castles, as poachers keep their dogs, has scared away the wealthy and respectable capitalist and peaceful and industrious manufacturer.

All the landholders are uneducated, and unfit to serve in any of our civil establishments, or in those of any very

<sup>1</sup> The Brahman chief of Jhānsī was originally a governor under the Peshwā. The treaty of November 18th, 1817, recognized the then chief Rāmchand Rāo, his heirs and successors, as hereditary rulers of Jhānsī. Rāmchand Rāo was granted the title of Rājā by the British government in 1832, and died without issue on the 20th August, 1835. (*N. W. P. Gazetteer*, Vol. I, p. 296.) See *post*, p. 234 and chapter xxix.

<sup>2</sup> The chiefs of Jālaun also were officers under the Marāthā government of the Peshwā up to 1817. In consequence of gross misgovernment, an English superintendent was appointed in 1838, and the state lapsed to the British government, owing to failure of heirs, in 1840 (*ibid.* p. 229).

<sup>3</sup> *Ante*, p. 178, note.

civilized governments ; and they are just as unfitted to serve in our military establishments, where strict discipline is required. The lands they occupy are cultivated because they depend almost entirely upon the rents they get from them for subsistence ; and because every petty chief and his family hold their lands rent-free, or at a trifling quit-rent, on the tenure of military service, and their residue forms all the market for land produce which the cultivators require. They dread the transfer of the rule to our government, because they now form almost exclusively all the establishments of their domestic chief, civil as well as military ; and know that, were our rule to be substituted, they would be almost entirely excluded from these, at least for a generation or two. In our regiments, horse or foot, there is hardly a man from Bundēlkhand, for the reasons above stated ; nor are there any in the Gwālior regiments and contingents which are stationed in the neighbourhood ; though the land among them is become minutely subdivided, and they are obliged to seek service or starve. They are all too proud for manual labour, even at the plough. No Bundēlkhand Rājpūt will, I believe, condescend to put his hand to one.

Among the Marāthā states, Sikhs, and Muhammadans, there is no bond of union of this kind. The establishments, military as well as civil, are everywhere among them composed for the most part of foreigners ; and the landed interests under such governments would dread nothing from the prospect of a transfer to our rule ; on the contrary, they and the mass of the people would almost everywhere hail it as a blessing.

There are two reasons why we should leave these small native states under their own chiefs, even when the claim to the succession is feeble or defective ; first, because it tends to relieve the minds of other native chiefs from the apprehension, already too prevalent among them, that we desire by degrees to absorb them all, because we think our government would do better for the people ; and secondly, because, by leaving them as a contrast, we afford to the

people of India the opportunity of observing the superior advantages of our rule.

"'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view," in governments as well as in landscapes ; and if the people of India, instead of the living proofs of what perilous things native governments, whether Hindoo or Muhammedan, are in reality, were acquainted with nothing but such pictures of them as are to be found in their histories and in the imaginations of their priests and learned men (who lose much of their influence and importance under our rule), they would certainly, with proneness like theirs to delight in the marvellous, be far from satisfied, as they now are, that they never had a government so good as ours, and that they never could hope for another so good, were ours removed.<sup>1</sup>

For the advantages which we derive from leaving them independent, we are, no doubt, obliged to pay a heavy penalty in the plunder of our wealthy native subjects by the gangs of robbers of all descriptions whom they foster ; but this evil may be greatly diminished by a judicious interposition of our authority to put down such bands.<sup>2</sup>

In Bundēlkhand, at present, the government and the lands of the native chiefs are in the hands of three of the

<sup>1</sup> Lapse of years has increased the distance and the enchantment, and modern agitators and sentimentalists discover marvellous excellences in the native governments of the now remote past. The methods of government in the existing native states have been so profoundly modified by the influence of the imperial government that these states are no longer as instructive in the way of contrast as they were in the author's day.

<sup>2</sup> The author consistently held the views above enunciated, and defended the policy of maintaining the native states. He was of opinion that the system of annexation favoured by Lord Dalhousie and his Council "had a downward tendency, and tended to crush all the higher and middle classes connected with the land." He considered that the Government of India should have undertaken the management of Oudh, but that it had no right to annex the province, and appropriate its revenues. (*Journey through the Kingdom of Oude*, p. xxii, etc.) Since 1858 the policy of annexation has been repudiated.

Hindoo military classes, Bundēlas, Dhandēlas, and Pawārs. The principal chiefs are of the first, and their feudatories are chiefly of the other two. A Bundēla cannot marry the daughter of a Bundēla ; he must take his wife from one or other of the other two tribes ; nor can a member of either of the other two take his wife from his own tribe; he must take her from the Bundēlas, or the other tribe. The wives of the greatest chiefs are commonly from the poorest families of their vassals ; nor does the proud family from which she has been taken feel itself exalted by the alliance ; neither does the poorest vassal among the Pawārs and Dhandēls feel that the daughter of his prince has condescended in becoming his wife. All they expect is a service for a few more yeomen of the family among the retainers of the sovereign.

The people are in this manner, from the prince to the peasant, indissolubly linked to each other, and to the soil they occupy ; for, where industry is confined almost exclusively to agriculture, the proprietors of the soil and the officers of government, who are maintained out of its rents, constitute nearly the whole of the middle and higher classes. About one-half of the lands of every state are held on service tenure by vassals of the same family or clan as the chief ; and there is hardly one of them who is not connected with that chief by marriage. The revenue derived from the other half is spent in the maintenance of establishments formed almost exclusively of the members of these families.

They are none of them educated for civil offices under any other rule, nor could they, for a generation or two, be induced to submit to wear military uniform, or learn the drill of regular soldiers. They are mere militia, brave as men can be, but unsusceptible of discipline. They have, therefore, a natural horror at the thought of their states coming under any other than a domestic rule, for they could have no chance of employment in the civil or military establishments of a foreign power ; and their lands would,

they fear, be resumed, since the service for which they had been given would be no longer available to the rulers. It is said that, in the long interval from the commencement of the reign of Alexander the Third to the end of that of David the Second,<sup>1</sup> not a single baron could be found in Scotland able to sign his own name. The Bundēlkhand barons have never, I believe, been quite so bad as this, though they have never yet learned enough to fit them for civil offices under us. Many of them can write and read their own language, which is that common to the other countries around them.<sup>2</sup>

Bundēlkhand was formerly possessed by another tribe of Rājpūts, the proud Chandēls, who have now disappeared altogether from this province. If one of that tribe can still be found, it is in the humblest rank of the peasant or the soldier; but its former strength is indicated by the magnificent artificial lakes and ruined castles which are traced to them; and by the reverence which is still felt by the present dominant classes of [sic] their old capital of Mahoba. Within a certain distance around that ruined city no one now dares to beat the "nakkāra," or great drum used in festivals or processions, lest the spirits of the old Chandel chiefs who there repose should be roused to vengeance;<sup>3</sup> and a kingdom could not tempt one of the Bundēlas, Pawārs, or Chandēls, to accept the government of the parish ["mauza"] in which it is situated. They will take subordinate offices there under others *with fear and*

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 1249 to A.D. 1371.

<sup>2</sup> Bundelkhandī is a dialect of Hindi, characterized by many peculiarities of grammar and vocabulary, which have never been properly elucidated. A few particulars, not quite accurate, are given in Kellogg's excellent Hindi Grammar. Any energetic young scholar who may choose to work at Bundelkhandī will find the field practically untouched. The editor made a collection of notes on the dialect many years ago, but did not proceed with the work, and nobody else has touched the subject.

<sup>3</sup> The editor was told of a case in which two chiefs suffered for beating their drums in Mahoba.

*trembling*, but nothing could induce one of them to meet the governor. When the deadly struggle between these two tribes took place cannot now be discovered.<sup>1</sup>

In the time of Akbar, the Chandēls were powerful in Mahoba, as the celebrated Durgāvatī, the queen of Garhā

<sup>1</sup> See notes *ante*, p.p. 176 and 217, and the authorities there cited. The Chandella history occupies an important place in the mediæval annals of India, and has been discussed by many writers. Several important inscriptions of the dynasty have recently been correctly edited in the *Epigraphia Indica*. Mahoba is not a “ruined city”; it is a moderately prosperous country town, with a tolerable bazaar, and about seven thousand inhabitants. It is the headquarters of a “tahsildār,” or sub-collector, and is now a station on the Midland Railway. The ruined temples and places in and near the town are of much interest. For many miles round the country is full of remarkable remains, some of which are in fairly good preservation. The published descriptions of these works are far from being exhaustive. The author was mistaken in supposing that the power of the Chandēls was broken by the Bundēlas. The last Chandēl king, who ruled over an extensive dominion, was Paramārrdi Deva, or Parmāl. This prince was defeated in a pitched battle, or rather a series of battles, near the Betwa river, by Prīthirāj Chauhān, king of Kanauj, in the year 1182. A few years later, the victor was himself vanquished and slain by the advancing Muhammedans. Mahoba and the surrounding territories then passed through many vicissitudes, imperfectly recorded in the pages of history, and were ruled from time to time by Musalmāns, Bhars, Khangārs, and others. The Bundēlas, an offshoot of the Gaharwār clan, did not come into notice before the middle of the fourteenth century, and first became a power in India under the leadership of Champat Rāi, the contemporary of Jahāngīr and Shāh Jāhan, in the first half of the seventeenth century. The line of Chandēl kings was continued in the persons of obscure local chiefs, whose very names are, for the most part, forgotten. The story of Durgāvatī, briefly told in the text, casts a momentary flash of light on their obscurity. The principal nobleman of the Chandēl race now occupying a dignified position is the Rājā of Gidhaur in the Mungir (Monghyr) district of Bengal, whose ancestor emigrated from Mahoba.

The war between the Chandēls and Chauhāns is the subject of a long section or canto of the great Hindi epic the “Rāesā” ascribed to Chand Bardai, and is also the theme of the songs of many popular rhapsodists. The story is, of course, encrusted with a thick deposit of miraculous legend, and none of the details can be relied on. But the fact and the date of the war are fully proved by incontestable evidence.

Mandlā, whose reign extended over the Sāgar and Ner-budda territories and the greater part of Berār, was a daughter of the reigning Chandēl prince of Mahoba. He condescended to give his daughter only on condition that the Gond prince who demanded her should, to save his character, come with an army of fifty thousand men to take her. He did so, and "nothing loth," Durgāvati departed to reign over a country where her name is now more revered than that of any other sovereign it has ever had. She was killed above two hundred and fifty years ago, about twelve miles from Jubbulpore, while gallantly leading on her troops in their third and last attempt to stem the torrent of Muhammadan invasion. Her tomb is still to be seen where she fell, in a narrow defile between two hills ; and a pair of large rounded stones which stand near are, according to popular belief, her royal drums turned into stone, which, in the dead of night, are still heard resounding through the woods, and calling the spirits of her warriors from their thousand graves around her. The travellers who pass this solitary spot, respectfully place upon the tomb the prettiest specimen they can find of the crystals which abound in the neighbourhood ; and, with so much of kindly feeling had the history of Durgāvatī inspired me, that I could not resist the temptation of adding one to the number when I visited her tomb some sixteen years ago.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The marriage of Durgāvati is no proof that her father, the Chandēl Rājā, was powerful in Mahoba in the time of Akbar. It is rather an indication that he was poor and weak. If he had been rich and strong, he would probably have refused his daughter to a Gond, even though complaisant bards might invent a Rājpūt genealogy for the bridegroom. The story about the army of fifty thousand men cannot be readily accepted as sober fact. It looks like a courtly invention to explain a mésalliance. The inducement really offered to the proud but poor Chandēl was, in all likelihood, a large sum of money, according to the usual practice in such cases. Several indications exist of close relations between the Gonds and Chandēls in earlier times.

Early in Akbar's reign, in the year 1564, Asaf Khān, the imperial viceroy of Kāriā Mānikpur, obtained permission to invade the Gond territory. The young Rājā of Garhā Mandlā, Prēm Narāyan, was

I should mention that the Rājā of Samthar in Bundēlkhand<sup>1</sup> is by caste a Gūjar ;<sup>2</sup> and he has not yet any landed

then a minor, and the defence of the kingdom devolved on Durgāvatī, the dowager queen. She first took up her position at the great fortress of Singaurgarh, north-west of Jabalpur, and, being there defeated, retired through Garhā, to the south-east, towards Mandlā. After an obstinately contested fight the invaders were again successful, and broke the queen's stout resistance. " Mounted on an elephant, she refused to retire, though she was severely wounded, until her troops had time to recover the shock of the first discharge of artillery, and, notwithstanding that she had received an arrow-wound in her eye, bravely defended the pass in person. But, by an extraordinary coincidence, the river in the rear of her position, which had been nearly dry a few hours before the action commenced, began suddenly to rise, and soon became unfordable. Finding her plan of retreat thus frustrated, and seeing her troops give way, she snatched a dagger from her elephant-driver, and plunged it into her bosom." ". . . Of all the sovereigns of this dynasty she lives most in the recollection of the people ; she carried out many highly useful works in different parts of her kingdom, and one of the large reservoirs near Jabalpur is still called the Rānī Talāo in memory of her. During the fifteen years of her regency she did much for the country, and won the hearts of the people, while her end was as noble and devoted as her life had been useful." (*Central Provinces Gazetteer*, p. 283 ; with references to Sleeman's article on the Rājās of Garhā Mandlā, and "Briggs' Farishta," edn. 1829, vol. ii, p.p. 217, 218.) A memoir of Asaf Khān Abdul Majid, the general who overcame Durgāvati, will be found in Blochmann's translation of the *Aīn-i-Akbarī*, Vol. I, p. 366.

<sup>1</sup> Samthar is a small state, lying between the Betwa and Pahūj rivers, to the south-west of the Jālaun district. It was separated from the Datiyā State only one generation previous to the British occupation of Bundēlkhand. A treaty was concluded with the Rājā in 1812. (*N. W. P. Gazetteer*, vol. i, p. 578.)

<sup>2</sup> Gūjars occupy more than a hundred villages in the Jālaun district, chiefly among the ravines of the Pahūj river. The Gūjar caste is most numerous in the Panjāb and the upper districts of the North-Western Provinces. It is not very highly esteemed, and is of about equal rank with the Ahīr caste and rather below the Jāt. Gūjar colonies are settled in the Hoshangābād and Nimar districts of the Central Provinces. The Gūjars are inveterate cattle-lifters, and always ready to take advantage of any relaxation of the bonds of order to prey upon their neighbours. Many sections of the caste have adopted the Muhammadan faith.

aristocracy like that of the Bundēlas about him. One of his ancestors, not long ago, seized upon a fine open plain, and built a fort upon it, and the family has ever since, by means of this fort, kept possession of the country around, and drawn part of their revenues from depredations upon their neighbours and travellers. The Jhānsī and Jālaun chiefs are Brahmans of the same family as the Peshwā.

In the states governed by chiefs of the military classes, nearly the whole produce of the land goes to maintain soldiers, or military retainers, who are always ready to fight or rob for their chief. In those governed by the Brahmanical class, nearly the whole produce goes to maintain priests ; and the other chiefs would soon devour them, as the black ants devour the white, were not the paramount power to interpose and save them. While the Peshwā lived, he interposed ; but all his dominions were *running into priesthood*, like those in Sāgar and Bundēlkhand, and must soon have been swallowed up by the military chiefs around him, had we not taken his place. Jālaun and Jhānsī are preserved only by us, for, with all their religious, it is impossible for them to maintain efficient military establishments ; and the Bundēla chiefs have always a strong desire to eat them up, since these states were all sliced out of their principalities when the Peshwā was all-powerful in Hindustan.

The Chhatarpur Rājā is a Pawār. His father had been in the service of the Bundēla Rājā ; but, when we entered upon our duties as the paramount power in Bundēlkhand, the son had succeeded to the little principality seized upon by his father ; and, on the principle of respecting actual possession, he was recognized by us as the sovereign.<sup>1</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> The small state of Chhatarpur lies to the south of the Hamīrpur district, between the Dasān and Ken rivers. The town of Chhatarpur is on the military road from Bānda to Sāgar, and is remarkable for the mausoleum and ruined palace of Rājā Chhatarsāl, after whom the town is named. Khajurāho, the ancient religious capital of the Chandēl monarchy, with its magnificent group of mediaeval Hindoo and Jain temples, is within the limits of the state, about eighteen

Bundēla Rājās, east of the Dasān river, are descended from Rājā Chhatarsāl, and are looked down upon by the Bundēla Rājās of Orchhā, Chandēri, and Datiyā, west of the Dasān, as Chhatarsāl was in the service of one of their ancestors, from whom he wrested the estates which his descendants now enjoy. Chhatarsāl, in his will, gave one-third of the dominion he had thus acquired to the strongest power then in India, the Peshwā, in order to secure the other two-thirds to his two sons Hardī Sā and Jagatrāj, in the same manner as princes of the Roman empire used to bequeath a portion of theirs to the emperor.<sup>1</sup> Of the Peshwā's share we have now got all, except Jālaun. Jhānsī was subsequently acquired by the Peshwā, or rather by his subordinates, with his sanction and assistance.<sup>2</sup>

miles south-east of Chhatarpur, and thirty-four miles south of Mahoba. The Pawār adventurer, who succeeded in separating Chhatarpur from the Paunā state, was originally a common soldier.

<sup>1</sup> Concerning Chhatarsāl (A.D. 1671 to 1734 or 1735), see notes *ante*, p.p. 115 and 176. He was one of the sons of Champat Rāi. The correct date of the death of Chhatarsāl is Pūs Badi 3, Sanwat, 1788, = 1731 A.D. Hardī Sā succeeded to the Rāj, or kingdom, of Pannā, and Jagatrāj to that of Jaitpur. These kingdoms quickly broke up, and the fragments are now in part native states, and in part British territory. The Orchhā State was formed about the beginning of the sixteenth century, and the Chandēri and Datiyā States are offshoots from it, which separated during the seventeenth century.

<sup>2</sup> As already observed (*ante*, p. 225, note), the Jālaun State became British territory in 1840, four years after the tour described in the text, and four years before the publication of the book. The Jhānsī State similarly lapsed on the death of Rājā Gangādhar Rāo in November, 1853. The Rāni Lachhmī Bāi joined the mutineers, and was killed in battle in June, 1858.



## CHAPTER XXVII

### Blights.

I HAD a visit from my little friend the Sarimant, and the conversation turned upon the causes and effects of the dreadful blight to which the wheat crops in the Nerbudda districts had of late years been subject. He said that "the people at first attributed this great calamity to an increase in the crime of adultery which had followed the introduction of our rule, and which," he said, "was understood to follow it everywhere; that afterwards it was by most people attributed to our frequent measurement of the land, and inspection of fields, with a view to estimate their capabilities to pay; which the people considered a kind of *incest*, and which he himself, the Deity, can never tolerate. The land is," said he, "considered as the *mother* of the prince or chief who holds it—the great parent from whom he derives all that maintains him—his family and his establishments. If well treated, she yields this in abundance to her son; but, if he presumes to look upon her with the eye of desire, she ceases to be fruitful; or the Deity sends down hail or blight to destroy all that she yields. The measuring the surface of the fields, and the frequent inspecting the crops by the chief himself, or by his immediate agents, were considered by the people in this light; and, in consequence, he never ventured upon these things. They were," he thought, "fully satisfied that we did it more with a view to distribute the burthen of taxation equally upon the people than to increase it collectively; still," he thought that, "either we should not do it at all, or delegate the duty to

inferior agents, whose close inspection of the great *parent* could not be so displeasing to the Deity.”<sup>1</sup>

Rām Chand Pundit said that “there was no doubt much truth in what Sarimant Sāhib had stated ; that the crops of late had unquestionably suffered from the constant measuring going on upon the lands ; but that the people (as he knew) had now become unanimous in attributing the calamities of season, under which these districts had been suffering so much, to the *eating of beef*—this was,” he thought, “the great source of all their sufferings.”

Sarimant declared that he thought “his Pundit was right, and that it would, no doubt, be of great advantage to them and to their rulers if government could be prevailed upon to prohibit the eating of beef ; that so great and general were the sufferings of the people from these calamities of seasons, and so firm, and now so general, the opinion that they arose chiefly from the practice of killing and eating cows that, in spite of all the other superior blessings of our rule, the people were almost beginning to wish their old Marāthā rulers in power again.”

I reminded him of the still greater calamities the people of Bundēlkhand had been suffering under.

“True,” said he, “but among them there are crimes enough of every day occurrence to account for these things ; but, under your rule, the Deity has only one or other of these three things to be offended with ; and, of these three, it must admitted that the eating of beef so near the sacred stream of the Nerbudda is the worst.”

<sup>1</sup> We are told in 2 Samuel, chap. xxiv, that the Deity was displeased at a census of the people, taken by Joab by the order of David, and destroyed of the people of Israel seventy thousand, besides women and children. [W. H. S.] The editor, in the course of seven years' experience in the Settlement department, of which six were spent in Bundēlkhand, never heard of the doctrine as to the incestuous character of surveys. Probably it has died out. Even a census no longer gives rise to alarm in most parts of the country. The wild rumours and theories common in 1872 and 1881 did not prevail in 1891; when the last census was taken.

The blight of which we were speaking had, for several seasons from the year 1829, destroyed the greater part of the wheat crops over extensive districts along the line of the Nerbudda, and through Mālwā generally; and old people stated that they recollect two returns of this calamity at intervals of from twenty to twenty-four years. The pores, with which the stalks are abundantly supplied to admit of their readily taking up the aqueous particles that float in the air,<sup>1</sup> seem to be more open in an easterly wind than in any other; and, when this wind prevails at the same time that the air is filled with the farina of the small parasitic fungus, whose depredations on the corn constitute what they call the rust, mildew, or blight, the particles penetrate into these pores, speedily sprout and spread their small roots into the cellular texture, where they intercept, and feed on, the sap in its ascent; and the grain in the ear, deprived of its nourishment, becomes shrivelled, and the whole crop is often not worth the reaping. It is at first of a light, beautiful orange-colour, and found chiefly upon the 'alsī' (linseed)<sup>2</sup>, which it does not seem much to injure; but, about the end of February, the fungi ripen, and shed their seeds rapidly, and they are taken up by the wind, and carried over the corn-fields. I have sometimes seen the air tinted of an orange colour for many days by the quantity of these seeds which it has contained; and that without the wheat crops suffering at all, when any but an easterly wind has prevailed; but, when the air is so charged with this farina, let but an easterly wind blow for twenty-four hours, and all the wheat crops under its influence are destroyed—nothing can save them. The stalks and leaves

<sup>1</sup> This remark is, of course, erroneous.

<sup>2</sup> The flax plant (*Linum usitatissimum*) is grown in India solely for the sake of the linseed. Flax is never made, and the stalk of the plant, as ordinarily grown, is too short for the manufacture of fibre. The attempts to introduce flax manufacture into India, though not ultimately successful, have proved that good flax can be made in the country. Indian linseed is very largely exported. (Article "Flax" in Balfour's *Cyclopaedia*, 3rd edition.)

become first of an orange colour from the light colour of the farina which adheres to them, but this changes to deep brown. All that part of the stalk that is exposed seems as if it had been pricked with needles, and had exuded blood from every puncture ; and the grain in the ear withers in proportion to the number of fungi that intercept and feed upon its sap ; but the parts of the stalks that are covered by the leaves remain entirely uninjured ; and, when the leaves are drawn off from them, they form a beautiful contrast to the others, which have been exposed to the depredations of these parasitic plants.

Every pore, it is said, may contain from twenty to forty of these plants, and each plant may shed a hundred seeds,<sup>1</sup> so that a single shrub, infected with the disease, may disseminate it over the face of a whole district ; for, in the warm month of March, when the wheat is attaining maturity, these plants ripen and shed their seeds in a week, and consequently increase with enormous rapidity, when they find plants with their pores open ready to receive and nourish them. I went over a rich sheet of wheat cultivation in the district of Jubbulpore in January, 1836, which appeared to me devoted to inevitable destruction. It was intersected by slips and fields of "alsī," which the cultivators often sow along the borders of their wheat fields, which are exposed to the road, to prevent trespass.<sup>2</sup> All this "alsī" had become of a beautiful light orange colour from these fungi ; and the cultivators, who had had every field destroyed the year before by the same plant, surrounded my tent in despair, imploring me to tell them of some remedy. I knew of none ; but, as the "alsī" is not a very valuable plant, I recommended them, as their only chance, to pull it all up by the roots, and fling it into large tanks that were everywhere to be found. They did so, and no "alsī" was *intentionally* left in the district, for,

<sup>1</sup> Spores is the more accurate word.

<sup>2</sup> That is to say, cattle-trespass. Cattle do not care to eat the green flax plant. The fields are not fenced.



like drowning men catching at a straw, they caught everywhere at the little gleam of hope that my suggestion seemed to offer. Not a field of wheat was that season injured in the district of Jubbulpore; but I was soon satisfied that my suggestion had had nothing whatever to do with their escape, for not a single stalk of the wheat was, I believe, affected; while *some* stalks of the affected "alsī" must have been left by accident. Besides, in several of the adjoining districts, where the "alsī" remained in the ground, the wheat escaped. I found that, about the time when the blight usually attacks the wheat, westerly winds prevailed, and that it never blew from the east for many hours together. The common belief among the natives was that the prevalence of an east wind was necessary to give full effect to the attack of this disease, though they none of them pretended to know anything of its *modus operandi*—indeed they considered the blight to be a demon, which was to be driven off only by prayers and sacrifices.

It is worthy of remark that hardly anything suffered from the attacks of these fungi but the wheat. The "alsī," upon which it always first made its appearance, suffered something certainly, but not much, though the stems and leaves were covered with them. The gram (*Cicer arietinum*) suffered still less—indeed the grain in this plant often remained uninjured, while the stems and leaves were covered with the fungi, in the midst of fields of wheat that were entirely destroyed by ravages of the same kind. None of the other pulses were injured, though situated in the same manner in the midst of the fields of wheat that were destroyed. I have seen rich fields of uninterrupted wheat cultivation for twenty miles by ten, in the valley of the Nerbudda, so entirely destroyed by this disease that the people would not go to the trouble of gathering one field in four, for the stalks and the leaves were so much injured that they were considered as unfit or unsafe for fodder; and during the same season its ravages were equally felt in

the districts along the table-lands of the Vindhya range, north of the valley, and, I believe, those upon the Sātpura range, south. The last time I saw this blight was in March, 1832, in the Sāgar district, where its ravages were very great, but partial ; and I kept bundles of the blighted wheat hanging up in my house, for the inspection of the curious, till the beginning of 1835.<sup>1</sup>

When I assumed charge of the district of Sāgar in 1831 the opinion among the farmers and landholders generally was that the calamities of season under which we had been suffering were attributable to the increase of *adultery*, arising, as they thought, from our indifference, as we seemed to treat it as a matter of little importance ; whereas it had always been considered under former governments as a case of *life and death*. The husband or his friends waited till they caught the offending parties together in criminal correspondence, and then put them both to death ; and the death of one pair generally acted, they thought, as a sedative upon the evil passions of a whole district for a year or two. Nothing can be more unsatisfactory than our laws for the punishment of adultery in India, where the Muhammadan criminal code has been followed, though the people subjected to it are not one-tenth Muhammadans. This law was enacted by Muhammad on the occasion of his favourite wife Ayesha being found under very suspicious circumstances with another man. A special direction from heaven required that four witnesses should swear positively to the fact.

Ayesha and her paramour were, of course, acquitted, and the witnesses, being less than four, received the same punishment which would have been inflicted upon the criminals had the fact been proved by the direct testimony of the prescribed number—that is, eighty stripes of the

<sup>1</sup> The rust, or blight, described in the text was probably a species of *Unedo*. The gram, or chick-pea, and various kinds of pea and vetch are grown intermixed with the wheat. They ripen earlier, and are plucked up by the roots before the wheat is cut.

"korā," almost equal to a sentence of death. (See Korān, chap. xxiv, and chap. iv.)<sup>1</sup> This became the law among all Muhammadans. Ayesha's father succeeded Muhammad, and Omar succeeded Abū Bakr.<sup>2</sup> Soon after his accession to the throne, Omar had to sit in judgment upon Mughira, a companion of the prophet, the governor of Basrah,<sup>3</sup> who had been accidentally seen in an awkward position with a lady of rank by four men while they sat in an adjoining apartment. The door or window which concealed the criminal parties was flung open by the wind, at the time when they wished it most to remain closed. Three of the four men swore directly to the point. Mughira was Omar's favourite, and had been appointed to the government by him. Zāid, the brother of one of the three who had sworn to the fact, hesitated to swear to the *entire fact*.

"I think," said Omar, "that I see before me a man whom God would not make the means of disgracing one of the companions of the holy prophet."

Zāid then described circumstantially the most unequivocal position that was, perhaps, ever described in a public court of justice; but, still hesitating to swear to the *entire completion* of the crime, the criminals were acquitted, and his brother and the two others received the punishment described. This decision of the *Brutus of his age* and country settled the law of evidence in these matters; and no Muhammadan judge would now give a verdict against any person charged with adultery, without the four witnesses to the *entire fact*. No man hopes for a conviction for this crime in our courts; and, as he would have to drag his

<sup>1</sup> Chapter iv of the Korān is entitled "Women," and chapter xxiv is entitled "Light." The story of Ayesha's misadventure is given in Sale's notes to chapter xxiv.

<sup>2</sup> Muhammad died A.D. 632. Abūbakr succeeded him, and after a khilafate of only two years, was succeeded by Omar, who was assassinated in the twelfth year of his reign.

<sup>3</sup> Basrah (Bassorah, Bussorah) in the province of Baghdad, on the Shatt-ul-Arab, or combined stream of the Tigris and Euphrates, was founded by the Khalif Omar. •

wife or paramour through no less than three—that of the police officer, the magistrate, and the judge—to seek it, he has recourse to poison, either secretly, or with his wife's consent. She will commonly rather die than be turned out into the streets a degraded outcast. The seducer escapes with impunity, while his victim suffers all that human nature is capable of enduring. Where husbands are in the habit of poisoning their guilty wives from the want of *legal* means of redress, they will sometimes poison those who are suspected upon insufficient grounds. No magistrate ever hopes to get a conviction in the judge's court, if he commits a criminal for trial on this charge (under Regulation 17 of 1817), and, therefore, he never does commit. Regulation 7 of 1819 authorizes a magistrate to punish any person convicted of enticing away a wife or unmarried daughter for another's use; and an indignant functionary may sometimes feel disposed to stretch a point that the guilty man may not altogether escape.<sup>1</sup>

Redress for these wrongs is never sought in our courts, because they can never hope to get it. But it is a great mistake to suppose that the people of India want a heavier punishment for the crime than we are disposed to inflict—all they want is a fair chance of conviction upon such

<sup>1</sup> In the author's time the Muhammadan criminal law was applied to the whole population by Anglo-Indian judges, assisted by Muhammadan legal assessors, who gave rulings called *fatwas* on legal points. The Penal Code enacted in 1859 swept away the whole jungle of Regulations and *fatwas*, and established a scientific system of criminal jurisprudence, which has remained substantially unchanged to this day. Adultery is punishable under the Code by the Court of Session, but prosecutions for this offence are very rare. Enticing away a married woman is also defined as an offence, and is punishable by a magistrate. Complaints under this head are extremely numerous, and mostly false. Secret and unpunished murders of women are undoubtedly common, and are often reported as deaths from snake-bite or cholera. An aggrieved husband frequently tries to save his honour, and at the same time satisfy his vengeance, by trumping up a false charge of burglary against the suspected paramour, who generally replies by an equally false *alibi*.

reasonable proof as cases of this nature admit of, and such a measure of punishment as shall make it appear that their rulers think the crime a serious one, and that they are disposed to protect them from it. Sometimes the poorest man would refuse pecuniary compensation; but generally husbands of the poorer classes would be glad to get what the heads of their caste or circle of society might consider the expenses of a second marriage. They do not dare to live in adultery, they would be outcasts if they did; they must be married according to the forms of their caste, and it is reasonable that the seducer of the wife should be obliged to defray the costs of the injured husband's second marriage. The rich will, of course, always refuse such a compensation, but a law declaring the man convicted of this crime liable to imprisonment in irons at hard labour for two years, but entitled to his discharge within that time on an application from the injured husband or father, would be extremely popular throughout India. The poor man would make the application when assured of the sum which the elders of his caste consider sufficient; and they would take into consideration the means of the offender to pay. The woman is sufficiently punished by her degraded condition. The "fatwa" of a Muhammadan law officer should be dispensed with in such cases.<sup>1</sup>

In 1832 the people began to search for other causes [*scilicet*, of bad seasons]. The frequent measurements of

<sup>1</sup> A prosecution under the Penal Code for adultery can only be instituted by the husband, or the guardian representing him, and the woman is not punishable. Although the Muhammadan law of evidence has been got rid of, the Anglo Indian courts are still unsuitable for the prosecution of adultery cases, especially where natives are concerned. The English courts, though they do not require any specified number of witnesses, demand strict proof given in open court, and no native, whose honour has really been touched, cares to expose his domestic troubles to be wrangled over by lawyers. Many officers, including the editor, would be glad to see the section which renders adultery penal struck out of the Code. The matrimonial delinquencies of natives are better dealt with by the caste organizations, and those of Europeans by civil action.

the land, with a view to equalize the assessments, were thought of; even the operations of the Trigonometrical Survey,<sup>1</sup> which were then making a great noise in Central India, where their fires were seen every night burning upon the peaks of the highest ranges, were supposed to have had some share in exasperating the Deity; and the services of the most holy Brahmins were put in requisition to exorcise the peaks from which the engineers had taken their angles, the moment their instruments were removed. In many places, to the great annoyance and consternation of the engineers, the landmarks which they had left to enable them to correct their work as they advanced, were found to have been removed during their short intervals of absence, and they were obliged to do their work over again. The priests encouraged the disposition on the part of the peasantry to believe that men who required to do their work by the aid of fires lighted in the dead of the night upon *high places*, and work which no one but themselves seemed able to comprehend, must hold communion with supernatural beings, a communion which they thought might be displeasing to the Deity.

At last, in the year 1833, a very holy Brahman, who lived in his cloister near the iron suspension bridge over the Biās river, ten miles from Sāgar, sat down with a determination to *wrestle with the Deity* till he should be compelled to reveal to him the real cause of all these calamities of season under which the people were groaning.<sup>2</sup> After three days and nights of fasting and prayer, he saw a vision which stood before him in a white mantle, and told him that all these calamities arose from the slaughter of cows; and that under former governments this practice had

<sup>1</sup> The Trigonometrical Survey, originated by Colonel Lambton, was begun at Cape Comōrin in 1800. It is now almost, if not quite, complete. The stations are marked by masonry pillars, for the partial repair of which a small sum is annually allotted.

<sup>2</sup> Hindoos believe that holy men, by means of great austerities, can attain power to compel the gods to do their bidding.

been strictly prohibited, and the returns of the harvest had, in consequence, been always abundant, and subsistence cheap, in spite of invasion from without, insurrection within, and a good deal of misrule and oppression on the part of the local government. The holy man was enjoined by the vision to make this revelation known to the constituted authorities, and to persuade the people generally throughout the district to join in the petition for the prohibition of *beef-eating* throughout our Nerbudda territories. He got a good many of the most respectable of the landholders around him, and explained the wishes of the vision of the preceding night. A petition was soon drawn up and signed by many hundreds of the most respectable people in the district, and presented to the Governor-General's representative in these parts, Mr. F. C. Smith. Others were presented to the civil authorities of the district, and all stating in the most respectful terms how sensible the people were of the inestimable benefits of our rule, and how grateful they all felt for the protection to life and property, and to the free employment of all their advantages, which they had under it ; and for the frequent and large reduction in the assessments, and remission in the demand, on account of calamities of seasons. These, they stated, were all that government could do to relieve a suffering people, but they had all proved unavailing ; and yet, under this truly paternal rule, the people were suffering more than under any former government in its worst period of misrule—the hand of an *incensed God* was upon them ; and, as they had now, at last, after many fruitless attempts, discovered the real cause of this anger of the Deity, they trusted that we would listen to their prayers, and restore plenty and all its blessings to the country by prohibiting the *eating of beef*. All these dreadful evils had, they said, unquestionably originated in the (Sadr Bāzār) great market of the cantonments, where, for the first time, within one hundred miles of the sacred stream of the Nerbudda, men had purchased and eaten cows' flesh.

These people were all much attached to us and to our rule, and were many of them on the most intimate terms of social intercourse with us ; and, at the time they signed this petition, were entirely satisfied that they had discovered the real cause of all their sufferings, and impressed with the idea that we should be convinced, and grant their prayers.<sup>1</sup> The day is past. Beef continued to be eaten with undiminished appetite, the blight, nevertheless, disappeared, and every other sign of vengeance from above ; and the people are now, I believe, satisfied that they were mistaken. They still think that the lands do not yield so many returns of the seed under us as under former rulers ; that they have lost some of the *barkat* (blessings) which they enjoyed under them—they know not why. The fact is that under us the lands do not enjoy the salutary fallows which frequent invasions and civil wars used to cause under former governments. Those who survived such civil wars and invasions got better returns for their seed.

During the discussion of the question with the people, I had one day a conversation with the Sadr Amin, or head native judicial officer, whom I have already mentioned. He told me that “there could be no doubt of the truth of the conclusion to which the people had at length come. “There are,” he said, “some countries in which punishments follow crimes after long intervals, and, indeed, do not take place till some future birth ; in others, they follow crimes immediately ; and such is the country bordering the stream of *Mother Nerbudda*. This,” said he, “is a stream more holy than that of the great Ganges herself, since no man is supposed to derive any benefit from that stream unless he either bathe in it, or drink from it ; but the *sight* of the Nerbudda from a distant hill could bless him, and purify him. In other countries, the slaughter of cows and bullocks might not be punished for ages ; and the harvest, in such countries, might continue good through many

<sup>1</sup> For some account of the modern agitation against cow-killing, see note *ante*, p. 199.

successive generations under such enormities ; indeed, he was not quite sure that there might not be countries in which no punishment at all would inevitably follow ; but, so near the Nerbudda, this could not be the case.<sup>1</sup> Providence could never suffer beef to be eaten so near her sacred majesty without visiting the crops with blight, hail, or some other calamity, and the people with cholera morbus, small-pox, and other great pestilences. As for himself, he should never be persuaded that all these afflictions did not arise wholly and solely from this dreadful habit of eating beef. I declare," concluded he, "that if the government would but consent to prohibit the eating of beef, it might levy from the lands three times the revenue that they now pay."

The great festival of the Holi, the Saturnalia of India, terminates on the last day of Phālgun, or 16th of March.<sup>2</sup> On that day the Holi is burned ; and on that day the ravages of the monster (for monster they will have it to be) are supposed to cease. Any field that has remained untouched up to that time is considered to be quite secure from the moment the Holi has been committed to the flames. What gave rise to the notion I have never been able to discover, but such is the general belief. I suppose the siliceous epidermis must then have become too hard, and the pores in the stem too much closed up to admit of the further depredation of the fungi.

In the latter end of 1831, while I was at Sāgar, a cowherd in driving his cattle to water at a reach of the Biās river, called the Nardhardhār, near the little village of Jasrathi, was reported to have seen a vision that told him the waters of that reach, taken up and conveyed to the

<sup>1</sup> On the sacredness of the Nerbudda see note *ante*, p. 7, Chapter I.

<sup>2</sup> The Holi festival marks approximately the time of the vernal equinox, ten days before the full moon of the Hindoo month Phālgun. The day of the bonfire does not always fall on the 16th of March. It is not considered lucky to begin harvest till the Holi has been burnt.

fields in pitchers, would effectually keep off the blight from the wheat, provided the pitchers were not suffered to touch the ground on the way. On reaching the field, a small hole was to be made in the bottom of the pitcher, so as to keep up a small but steady stream, as the bearer carried it round the borders of the field, that the water might fall in a complete ring, except at a small opening which was to be kept dry, in order that the *monster* or *demon blight* might make his escape through it, not being able to cross over any part watered by the holy stream. The waters of the Biās river generally are not supposed to have any peculiar virtues. The report of this vision spread rapidly over the country ; and the people who had been suffering under so many seasons of great calamity were anxious to try anything that promised the slightest chance of relief. Every cultivator of the district prepared pots for the conveyance of the water, with tripods to support them while they rested on the road, that they might not touch the ground. The spot pointed out for taking the water was immediately under a fine large pipal-tree<sup>1</sup> which had fallen into the river, and on each bank was seated a Bairāgī, or priest of Vishnu. The blight began to manifest itself in the alsī (linseed) in January, 1832, but the wheat is never considered to be in danger till late in February, when it is nearly ripe ; and during that month and the following the banks of the river were crowded with people in search of the water. Some of the people came more than one hundred miles to fetch it, and all seemed quite sure that the holy water would save them. Each person gave the Bairāgī priest of his own side of the river two half-pence (copper pice), two pice weight of ghi (clarified butter), and two pounds of flour, before he filled his pitcher, to secure his blessings from it. These priests were strangers, and the offerings were entirely voluntary. The roads from this reach of the Biās river, up to the capital of the Orchhā Rājā, more than a hundred

<sup>1</sup> The pipal-tree (*Ficus religiosa*, Linn.; *Urostigma religiosum*, Gasp.) is sacred to Vishnu, and is universally venerated throughout India.

miles, were literally lined with these water-carriers ; and I estimated the number of persons who passed with the water every day for six weeks at ten thousand a day.<sup>1</sup>

After they had ceased to take the water, the banks were long crowded with people who flocked to see the place where priests and waters had worked such miracles, and to try and discover the source whence the water derived its virtues. It was remarked by some that the pipal-tree, which had fallen from the bank above many years before, had still continued to throw out the richest foliage from the branches above the surface of the water. Others declared that they saw a *monkey* on the bank near the spot, which no sooner perceived it was observed than it plunged into the stream and disappeared. Others again saw some flights of steps under the water, indicating that it had in days of yore been the site of a temple, whose god, no doubt, gave to the waters the wonderful virtues it had been found to possess. The priests would say nothing but that "it was the work of God, and, like all his works, beyond the reach of man's understanding." They made their fortunes, and got up the vision and *miracle*, no doubt, for that especial purpose.<sup>2</sup>

As to the effect, I was told by hundreds of farmers who had tried the waters that, though it had not anywhere kept the blight entirely off from the wheat, it was found that the fields which had not the advantages of water were entirely destroyed ; and, where the pot had been taken all round the field without leaving any dry opening for the *demon* to escape through, it was almost as bad ; but, when a small opening had been left, and the water carefully dropped around the field elsewhere, the crops had been very little injured ; which showed clearly the efficacy of the water,

<sup>1</sup> About four hundred thousand persons.

<sup>2</sup> Two pice  $\times$  400,000 = 800,000 pice, = 200,000 annas, = 12,500 rupees. Even if the author's estimate of the numbers be much too large, the pecuniary result must have been handsome, not to mention the butter and flour.

when all the ceremonies and observances prescribed by the vision had been attended to.

I could never find the cowherd who was said to have seen this vision, and, in speaking to my old friend, the Sadr Amin, learned in the shāstras,<sup>1</sup> on the subject, I told him that we had a short saying that would explain all this,—“a drowning man catches at a straw.”

“Yes,” said he, without any hesitation, “and we have another just as good for the occasion,—‘Sheep will follow each other, though it should be into a well.’”

<sup>1</sup> Hindoo sacred books.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

Pestle-and-Mortar Sugar-Mills —Washing away of the Soil.

ON the 13th [December, 1835] we came to Barwā Sāgar,<sup>1</sup> over a road winding among small ridges and conical hills, none of them much elevated or very steep; the whole being a bed of brown syenite, generally exposed to the surface in a decomposing state, intersected by veins and beds of quartz rocks, and here and there a narrow and shallow bed of dark basalt. One of these beds of basalt was converted into grey syenite by a large granular mixture of white quartz and feldspar with the black hornblende. From this rock the people form their sugar-mills, which are made like a pestle and mortar, the mortar being cut out of the hornblende rock, and the pestle out of wood.<sup>2</sup>

We saw a great many of these mortars during the march that could not have been in use for the last half-dozen centuries, but they are precisely the same as those still used all over India. The driver sits upon the end of the horizontal beam to which the bullocks are yoked; and in cold mornings it is very common to see him with a pair of good hot embers at his buttocks, resting upon a little pro-

<sup>1</sup> The lake known as Barwā Sāgar was formed by a Bundēla chief, who constructed an embankment to retain the waters of the Barwā stream, a tributary of the Betwā. The work was begun in 1705 and completed in 1737. The embankment is nearly three-quarters of a mile in length. The town is situated at the north-west corner of the lake, on the road from Jhānsi to the cantonment of Nowgong (properly Naugāon, or Nayāgāon), at a distance of twelve miles from Jhānsi. (*N. W. P. Gazetteer*, vol. i, p.p. 243 and 387.)

<sup>2</sup> The rude sketch given here in the author's text is not worth reproduction.

jection made behind him to the beam for the purpose of sustaining it [*sic*]. I am disposed to think that the most productive parts of the surface of Bundelkhand, like that of some of the districts of the Nerbudda territories which repose upon the back of the sandstone of the Vindhya chain, is [*sic*] fast flowing off to the sea through the great rivers, which seem by degrees to extend the channels of their tributary streams into every man's field, to drain away its substance by degrees, for the benefit of those who may in some future age occupy the islands of their delta. I have often seen a valuable estate reduced in value to almost nothing in a few years by some new *antennæ*, if I may so call them, thrown out from the tributary streams of great rivers into their richest and deepest soils. Declivities are formed, the soil gets nothing from the cultivator but the mechanical aid of the plough, and the more its surface is ploughed and cross-ploughed, the more of its substance is washed away towards the Bay of Bengal in the Ganges, or the Gulf of Cambay in the Nerbudda. In the districts of the Nerbudda, we often see these black hornblende mortars, in which sugar-canies were once pressed by a happy peasantry, now standing upon a bare and barren surface of sand-stone rock, twenty feet above the present surface of the culturable lands of the country. There are evident signs of the surface on which they now stand having been that on which they were last worked. The people get more juice from their small straw-coloured canes in these pestle-and-mortar mills than they can from those with cylindrical rollers in the present rude state of the mechanical arts all over India ; and the straw-coloured cane is the only kind that yields good sugar. The large purple canes yield a watery and very inferior juice ; and are generally and almost universally sold in the markets as a fruit. The straw-coloured canes, from being crowded under a very slovenly system, with little manure and less weeding, degenerate into a mere reed. The Otaheite cane, which

was introduced into India by me in 1827, has spread over the Nerbudda, and many other territories ; but that that will degenerate in the same manner under the same slovenly system of tillage, is too probable.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The "pestle-and-mortar" pattern of mill above described is the indigenous model till recently in universal use in India, but, in most parts of the country, where stone is not available, the "mortar" portion is made of wood. The stone mills are very expensive. In the Bānda and Hamīrpur districts of Bundēlkhand sugar-cane is now grown only in the small areas where good loam soil is found. The method of cultivation differs in several respects from that practised in the Gangetic plains, but the editor never observed the slovenliness of which the author complains. He always found the cultivation in sugar-cane villages to be extremely careful and laborious. Ancient stone mills are sometimes found in black soil country, and it is difficult to understand how sugar-cane was ever grown there. The author was mistaken in supposing that the indigenous pattern of mill is superior to a good roller mill. Within the last twenty years the indigenous mill has been completely superseded in most parts of the Panjab, North-Western Provinces, Bihār, and Oudh by the roller mill patented by Messrs. Mylne and Thompson of Bihār in 1869, and largely improved by subsequent modifications. The original patent having expired, thousands of roller mills are now annually made by native artisans, with little regard to the existing rights of the Bihār firm, which are frequently and shamelessly infringed. The iron rollers are cast in Delhi and other places, and completed on costly lathes in many country towns. The mills are generally hired out for the season, and kept in repair by the speculator. The Rājā of Nāhan in the Panjab does a large business of this kind, and finds it profitable. Since the first patent was taken out, many improvements in the design have been effected, and the best mills squeeze the cane absolutely dry. Some have two, and some three rollers. Messrs. Mylne and Thompson have also been successful in introducing other improved machinery for the manufacture of sugar in villages. The Rosa factory near Shahjahānpur in the North-Western Provinces makes sugar on a large scale by European methods.

When the author says that the large canes are sold "as a fruit" he means that the canes are used for eating, or rather sucking like a sugar-stick. The varieties of sugar-cane are extremely numerous, and the names vary much in different districts. According to Surgeon-General Balfour the Otaheite (Tahiti) cane is "probably *Saccharum violaceum*".<sup>2</sup> The ordinary Indian kinds belong to the species *Saccharum officinarum*. The Otaheite cane was introduced into the West Indies about 1794, and came to India from the Mauritius. It is more suitable for the

roller mill than for the indigenous mill, the stems being hard. In a letter dated 15th December, 1844, the author refers to his introduction of the Otaheite cane, and mentions that the Indian Agricultural Society awarded him a gold medal for this service. The cane was first planted in the Government Botanical Garden at Calcutta.



## CHAPTER XXIX

Interview with the Chiefs of Jhānsī—Disputed Succession.

ON the 14th<sup>1</sup> we came on fourteen miles to Jhānsī.<sup>2</sup> About five miles from our last ground we crossed the Baitantī river over a bed of syenite. At this river we mounted our elephant to cross, as the water was waist-deep at the ford. My wife returned to her palankeen as soon as we had crossed, but our little boy came on with me on the elephant, to meet the grand procession which I knew was approaching to greet us from the city. The Rājā of Jhānsī, Rām Chandar Rāo, died a few months ago, leaving a young widow and a mother, but no child.<sup>3</sup>

He was a young man of about twenty-eight years of age, timid, but of good capacity, and most amiable disposition. My duties brought us much into communication; and, though we never met, we had conceived a mutual esteem for each other. He had been long suffering from an affection of the liver, and had latterly persuaded himself that his mother was practising upon his life, with a view to secure the government to the eldest son of her daughter,

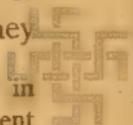
<sup>1</sup> December, 1835.

<sup>2</sup> Now the headquarters of the British district of the same name, and also of the Indian Midland Railway. Since the opening of this railway and the restoration of the Gwālior fort to Sindhia in 1885, the importance of Jhānsī, both civil and military, has much increased. The native town was given up by Sindhia in exchange for the Gwālior stronghold.

<sup>3</sup> This chief is called Rājā Rāo Rāmchand in the *Gazetteer*. He died on the 20th August, 1835. His administration had been weak, and his finances were left in great disorder. Under his successor the disorder of the administration became still greater.

which would, she thought, ensure the real power to her for life. That she wished him dead with this view, I had no doubt ; for she had ruled the state for several years up to 1831, during what she was pleased to consider his minority ; and she surrendered the power into his hands with great reluctance, since it enabled her to employ her *paramour* as minister, and enjoy his society as much as she pleased, under the pretence of holding *privy councils* upon affairs of great public interest.<sup>1</sup> He used to communicate his fears to me ; and I was not without apprehension that his mother might some day attempt to hasten his death by poison. About a month before his death he wrote to me to say that spears had been found stuck in the ground, under the water where he was accustomed to swim, with their sharp points upwards ; and, had he not, contrary to his usual practice, walked into the water, and struck his foot against one of them, he must have been killed. This was, no doubt, a thing got up by some designing person, who wanted to ingratiate himself with the young man ; for the mother was too shrewd a woman ever to attempt her son's life by such awkward means. About four months before I reached the capital, this amiable young prince died, leaving two paternal uncles, a mother, a widow, and one sister, the wife of one of our Sāgar pensioners, Morisar Rāo. The mother claimed the inheritance for her grandson by this daughter, a very handsome young lad, then at Jhānsī, on the pretence that her son had adopted him on his death-bed. She had his head shaved, and made him go through all the other ceremonies of mourning, as for the death of his real father. The eldest of his uncles, Raghunāth Rāo, claimed the inheritance as the next heir ; and all his party turned the young lad out of caste as a Brahman, for daring to go into mourning for a father who was yet alive ; one of the greatest of crimes, according to Hindoo law, for they

<sup>1</sup> Dowagers in Indian princely families are frequently involved in such intrigues and plots. The editor could specify some recent instances. Compare Chapter XXXIV, *post.*



would not admit that he had been adopted by the deceased prince.<sup>1</sup>

The question of inheritance had been referred for decision to the Supreme Government through the prescribed channel when I arrived, and the decision was every day expected. The mother, with her daughter and grandson, and the widow, occupied the castle, situated on a high hill overlooking the city ; while the two uncles of the deceased occupied their private dwellings in the city below. Raghunāth Rāo, the eldest, headed the procession that came out to meet me about three miles, mounted upon a fine female elephant, with his younger brother by his side. The minister, Nārū Gopāl, followed, mounted upon another, on the part of the mother and widow. Some of the Rājā's relations were upon two of the finest male elephants I have ever seen ; and some of their friends, with the "Bakshī," or paymaster (always an important personage), upon two others. Raghunāth Rāo's elephant drew up on the right of mine, and that of the minister on the left ; and, after the usual compliments had passed between us, all the others fell back, and formed a line in our rear. They had about fifty troopers mounted upon very fine horses in excellent condition, which curvetted before and on both sides of us ; together with a good many men on camels, and some four or five hundred foot attendants, all well dressed, but in various costumes. The elephants were so close to each other that the conversation, which we managed to keep up tolerably well, was general almost all the way to our tents ; every man taking a part as he found the opportunity of a pause to introduce his little compliment to the Honourable Company or to myself, which I did my best to answer or divert. I was glad to see the affectionate

<sup>1</sup> An adopted son passes completely out of the family of his natural, into that of his adoptive father, and all his rights and duties as a son are at the same time transferred. In this case, the adoption had not really taken place, and the lad's duty to his living natural father remained unaffected.

respect with which the old man was everywhere received, for I had in my own mind no doubt whatever that the decision of the Supreme Government would be in his favour. The whole cortége escorted me through the town to my tent, which was pitched on the other side ; and then they took their leave, still seated on their elephants, while I sat on mine, with my boy on my knee, till all had made their bow and departed. The elephants, camels, and horses, were all magnificently caparisoned, and the housings of the whole were extremely rich. A good many of the troopers were dressed in chain-armour, which, worn outside their light-coloured quilted vests, looked very like black gauze scarfs.

My little friend the Saïmants own elephant had lately died ; and, being unable to go to the cost of another with all its appendages, he had come thus far on horseback. A native gentleman can never condescend to ride an elephant without a train of at least a dozen attendants on horseback —he would almost as soon ride a horse *without a tail*.<sup>1</sup> Having been considered at one time as the equal of all these Rājās, I knew that he would feel a little mortified at finding himself buried in the crowd and dust ; and invited him, as we approached the city, to take a seat by my side. This gained him consideration, and evidently gave him great pleasure. It was late before we reached our tents, as we were obliged to move slowly through the streets of the city, as well for our own convenience, as for the safety of the crowd on foot before and around us. My wife, who had gone on before to avoid the crowd and dust, reached the tents half an hour before us.

In the afternoon, when my second large tent had been pitched, the minister came to pay me a visit with a large

<sup>1</sup> This statement will not apply to those districts in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh where elephants are numerous and often kept by native gentry of no great rank or wealth. A Rājā, of course, always likes to have a few mounted men clattering behind him, if possible.

train of followers, but with little display ; and I found him a very sensible, mild, and gentlemanly man, just as I expected from the high character he bears with both parties, and with the people of the country generally. Any unreserved conversation here in such a crowd was, of course, out of the question, and I told the minister that it was my intention early next morning to visit the tomb of his late master ; where I should be very glad to meet him, if he could make it convenient to come without any ceremony. He seemed much pleased with the proposal, and next morning we met a little before sunrise within the railing that encloses the tomb or cenotaph ; and there had a good deal of quiet and, I believe, unreserved talk about the affairs of the Jhānsī state, and the family of the late prince. He told me that, a few hours before the Rājā's death, his mother had placed in his arms for adoption the son of his sister, a very handsome lad of ten years of age—but whether the Rājā was or was not sensible at the time he could not say, for he never after heard him speak ; that the mother of the deceased considered the adoption as complete, and made her grandson go through the funeral ceremonies as at the death of his father, which for nine days were performed unmolested ; but, when it came to the tenth and last—which, had it passed quietly, would have been considered as completing the title of adoption—Raghunāth Rāo and his friends interposed, and prevented further proceedings, declaring that, while there were so many male heirs, no son could be adopted for the deceased prince according to the usages of the family.

The widow of the Rājā, a timid, amiable young woman, of twenty-five years of age, was by no means anxious for this adoption, having shared the suspicions of her husband regarding the practices of his mother ; and found his sister, who now resided with them in the castle, a most violent and overbearing woman, who would be likely to exclude her from all share in the administration, and make her life

very miserable, were her son to be declared the Rājā. Her wish was to be allowed to adopt, in the name of her deceased husband, a young cousin of his, Sadāsheo, the son of Nānā Bhāo. Gangādhar, the younger brother of Raghunāth Rāo, was exceedingly anxious to have his elder brother declared Rājā, because he had no sons, and from the debilitated state of his frame, must soon die, and leave the principality to him. Every one of the three parties had sent agents to the Governor-General's representative in Bundēlkhand to urge their claim; and, till the final decision, the widow of the late chief was to be considered the sovereign. The minister told me that there was one unanswerable argument against Raghunāth Rāo's succeeding, which, out of regard to his feelings, he had not yet urged, and about which he wished to consult me as a friend of the late prince and his widow; this was, that he was a *leper*, and that the signs of the disease were becoming every day more and more manifest.

I told him that I had observed them in his face, but was not aware that any one else had noticed them. I urged him, however, not to advance this as a ground of exclusion, since they all knew him to be a very worthy man, while his younger brother was said to be the reverse; and more especially I thought it would be very cruel and unwise to distress and exasperate him by so doing, as I had no doubt that, before this ground could be brought to their notice, Government would declare in his favour, right being so clearly on his side.

After an agreeable conversation with this sensible and excellent man, I returned to my tents to prepare for the reception of Raghunāth Rāo and his party. They came about nine o'clock with a much greater display of elephants and followers than the minister had brought with him. He and his friends kept me in close conversation till eleven o'clock, in spite of my wife's many considerate messages to say breakfast was waiting. He told me that the mother of the late Rājā, his nephew, was a very violent woman, who

had involved the state in much trouble during the period of her regency, which she managed to prolong till her son was twenty-five years of age, and resigned with infinite reluctance only three years ago ; that her minister during her regency, Gangadhar Muli, was at the same time her *paramour*, and would be surely restored to power and to her *embraces*, were her grandson's claim to the succession recognized ; that it was with great difficulty he had been able to keep this atrocious character under surveillance pending the consideration of their claims by the Supreme Government ; that, by having the head of her grandson shaved, and making him go through all the other funeral ceremonies with the other members of the family, she had involved him and his young *innocent wife* (who had unhappily continued to drink out of the same cup with her husband) *in the dreadful crime of mourning for a father whom they knew to be yet alive*, a crime that must be expiated by the “prāyaschit,”<sup>1</sup> which would be exacted from the young couple on their return to Sāgar before they could be restored to caste, from which they were now considered as excommunicated. As for the young widow, she was everything they could wish ; but she was so timid that she would be governed by the old lady, if she should have any ostensible part assigned her in the administration.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The “prāyaschit” is an expiating atonement by which the person humbles himself in public. It is often imposed for crimes committed in a *former birth*, as indicated by afflictions suffered in this. [W. H. S.] The practical working of Hindoo caste rules is often frightfully cruel. The victims of these rules in the case described by the author were a boy ten years old, and his child wife of still more tender years. Yet all the penalties, including rigorous fasts, would be mercilessly exacted from these innocent children. Leprosy and childlessness are among the afflictions which are supposed to prove the sinfulness of the sufferer in some former birth, perhaps thousands of years ago.

<sup>2</sup> The poor young widow died of grief some months after my visit ; her spirits never rallied after the death of her husband, and she never ceased to regret that she had not burned herself with his remains. The people of Jhānsī generally believe that the prince's mother brought about his death by (dāñāi) slow poison, and I am afraid that

I told the old gentleman that I believed it would be my duty to pay the first visit to the widow and mother of the late prince, as one of pure condolence, and that I hoped my doing so would not be considered any mark of disrespect towards him, who must now be looked up to as the head of the family. He remonstrated against this most earnestly ; and, at last, tears came into his eyes as he told me that, if I paid the first visit to the castle, he should never again be able to show his face outside his door, so great would be the indignity he would be considered to have suffered ; but, rather than I should do this, he would come to my tents, and escort me himself to the castle. Much was to be said on both sides of the weighty question ; but, at last, I thought that the arguments were in his favour—that, if I went to the castle first, he might possibly resent it upon the poor woman and the prime minister when he came into power, as I had no doubt he soon would—and that I might be consulting their interest as much as his feelings by going to his house first. In the evening I received a message from the old lady, urging the necessity of my paying the first visit of condolence for the death of my young friend to the widow and mother. "The rights of mothers," said she, "are respected in all countries ; and, in India, the first visit of condolence for the death of a man is always due to the mother, if alive." I told the messenger that my resolution was unaltered, and would, I trusted, be found the best for all parties under present circumstances. I told him that I dreaded the resentment towards them of Raghunāth Rāo, if he came into power.

"Never mind that," said he : "my mistress is of too proud a spirit to dread resentment from any one—pay her the compliment of the first visit, and let her enemies do their worst." I told him that I could leave Jhānsī without

this was the impression on the mind of the poor widow. The minister, who was entirely on her side, and a most worthy and able man, was quite satisfied that this suspicion was without any foundation whatever in truth. [W. H. S.]

visiting either of them, but could not go first to the castle ; and he said that my departing thus would please the old lady better than the *second visit*. The minister would not have said this—the old lady would not have ventured to send such a message by him—the man was an under-strapper ; and I left him to mount my elephant and pay my two visits.<sup>1</sup>

With the best cortége I could muster, I went to Raghunāth Rāo's, where I was received with a salute from some large guns in his courtyard, and entertained with a party of dancing girls and musicians in the usual manner. Attar of roses and “pān”<sup>2</sup> were given, and valuable shawls put before me, and refused in the politest terms I could think of ; such as, “Pray do me the favour to keep these things for me till I have the happiness of visiting Jhānsī again, as I am going through Gwālior, where nothing valuable is a moment safe from thieves.” After sitting an hour, I mounted my elephant, and proceeded up to the castle, where I was received with another salute from the bastions. I sat for half an hour in the hall of audience with the minister and all the principal men of the court, as Raghunāth Rāo was to be considered as a private gentleman till the decision of the Supreme Government should be made known ; and the handsome lad, Krishan Rāo, whom the old woman wished to adopt, and whom I had often seen at Sāgar, was at my request brought in and seated by my side. By him I sent my message of condolence to the widow and mother of his deceased uncle, couched in the usual terms—that the happy effects of good government in the prosperity of this city, and the comfort

<sup>1</sup> Considering the fact that, “till the final decision, the widow of the late chief was to be considered the sovereign,” it would be difficult to justify the author's decision. The reigning sovereign was clearly entitled to the first visit. Questions of precedence, salutes, and etiquette are as the very breath of their nostrils to the native nobility.

<sup>2</sup> The leaf of *Piper betel*, handed to guests at ceremonial entertainments, along with the nut of *Areca catechu*, made up in a packet of gold or silver leaf.

and happiness of the people, had extended the fame of the family all over India ; and that I trusted the reigning member of that family, whoever he might be, would be sensible that it was his duty to sustain that reputation by imitating the example of those who had gone before him. After attar of roses and pān had been handed round in the usual manner, I went to the summit of the highest tower in the castle, which commands an extensive view of the country around.

The castle stands upon the summit of a small hill of syenitic rock. The elevation of the outer wall is about one hundred feet above the level of the plain, and the top of the tower on which I stood about one hundred feet more, as the buildings rise gradually from the sides to the summit of the hill. The city extends out into the plain to the east from the foot of the hill on which the castle stands. Around the city there is a good deal of land, irrigated from four or five tanks in the neighbourhood, and now under rich wheat crops ; and the gardens are very numerous, and abound in all the fruit and vegetables that the people most like. Oranges are very abundant and very fine, and our tents have been actually buried in them and all the other fruits and vegetables which the kind people of Jhānsī have poured in upon us. The city of Jhānsī contains about sixty thousand inhabitants, and is celebrated for its manufacture of carpets.<sup>1</sup> There are some very beautiful temples in the city, all built by Gosāins, one [*sic*] of the priests of Siva who here engage in trade, and accumulate much

<sup>1</sup> This estimate of the population was probably excessive. The present population, including the cantonments, is 53,779. In 1886 the fort of Gwālior and the cantonment of Morār were surrendered by the Government of India to Sindhiā in exchange for the fort and town of Jhānsī. Both forts were mutually surrendered and occupied on the 10th of March, 1886. Sindhiā also surrendered fifty-eight villages in exchange for thirty given up by the Government of India, and the difference in value was adjusted by cash payments. The detailed arrangements were finally sanctioned by Lord Dufferin on 13th June, 1888.